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a little
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the trees,
save the
country

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A Magazine of the Arts

A Tata Enterprise

LUME XXVII DECEMBER 1973 NUMBER 1

DITORIAL

A Forgotten Culture
by M. R. A.

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by T. Narayanan

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2 CIVILISATION AND CULTURE IN THE MAKONG VALLEY

3 THE THIRTEEN STYLES

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OMPONG PREAH	(second half of the eighth century A.D.)
KULEN	(first half of the ninth century A.D.)
PREAH KOH	(second half of the ninth century A.D.)
BAKONG	(second half of the ninth century A.D.)
PHNOM BAKHENG	(end of the ninth and beginning of the tenth century A.D.)
KOH KER	(about the middle of the tenth century A.D.)
BANTEAY SREI	(second half of the tenth century A.D.)
KLEANG	(end of the tenth and first half of the eleventh century A.D.)
BAPHUON	(second half of the eleventh century A.D.)
ANGKOR VAT	(end of the eleventh and first half of the twelfth century A.D.)
BAYON	(end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century A.D.)

Cover : One of the typical Bodhisattva monumental sculptures on the towers of Angkor Thom or the Bayon. Photo : Lance Dane.

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A Forgotten Culture

The advanceguard of the intelligentsia everywhere
has already initiated the concept of a one world culture,
which may bring the heritage of the whole of mankind,
from pre-history down to the beginnings of history,
in the consciousness of the least little of men and women
on our planet.

In this context,
it is not surprising that
the complexes of Angkor were discovered, described,
analysed and renovated
by the Khmer people, under the advice of the
Ecole de Extreme Orient of France.

33776

And what has been revealed by now,
(though menaced by the current conflict in Cambodia)
in the splendorous art of Hindu and Buddhist inspiration, is
vaster in conception,
more comprehensive in elaboration and infinitely more detailed,
than any monument of those two faiths in India,
Central Asia or South East Asia.

The marvels of Angkor have not yet come
within the purview of our Indian consciousness.

MARG is privileged to present the first analytical treatment,
which, we hope,
will be the beginning of research, amplification and popularisation
in our country of the miracles of achievement
of a sister civilisation, during a thousand years, inspired
by the concepts emerging from the Indian fountainhead.

Meanwhile, we do not want to present Angkor in any spirit of chauvinism
as part of India's mighty past,
but as an independent development which achieved
the heights of creative ability in a context
quite different from our own,
in the hands of people,
who had merely accepted the inspiration of the noblest ideals
of the Hindu and Buddhist faiths,
but worked out their destinies in their own inimitable manner.

A. *Seventeenth century wood carving of a princely worshipper from the temple of Angkor Vat. Phnom Penh Museum.*

B. *The Great Khmer Monarch, Jayavarman VII. The head is almost reminiscent of Gupta Buddhas of fourth-fifth centuries A. D. Phnom Penh Museum.*

C. *A Bodhisattava head with the seated Buddha inset in Ushnisha. Phnom Penh Museum.*

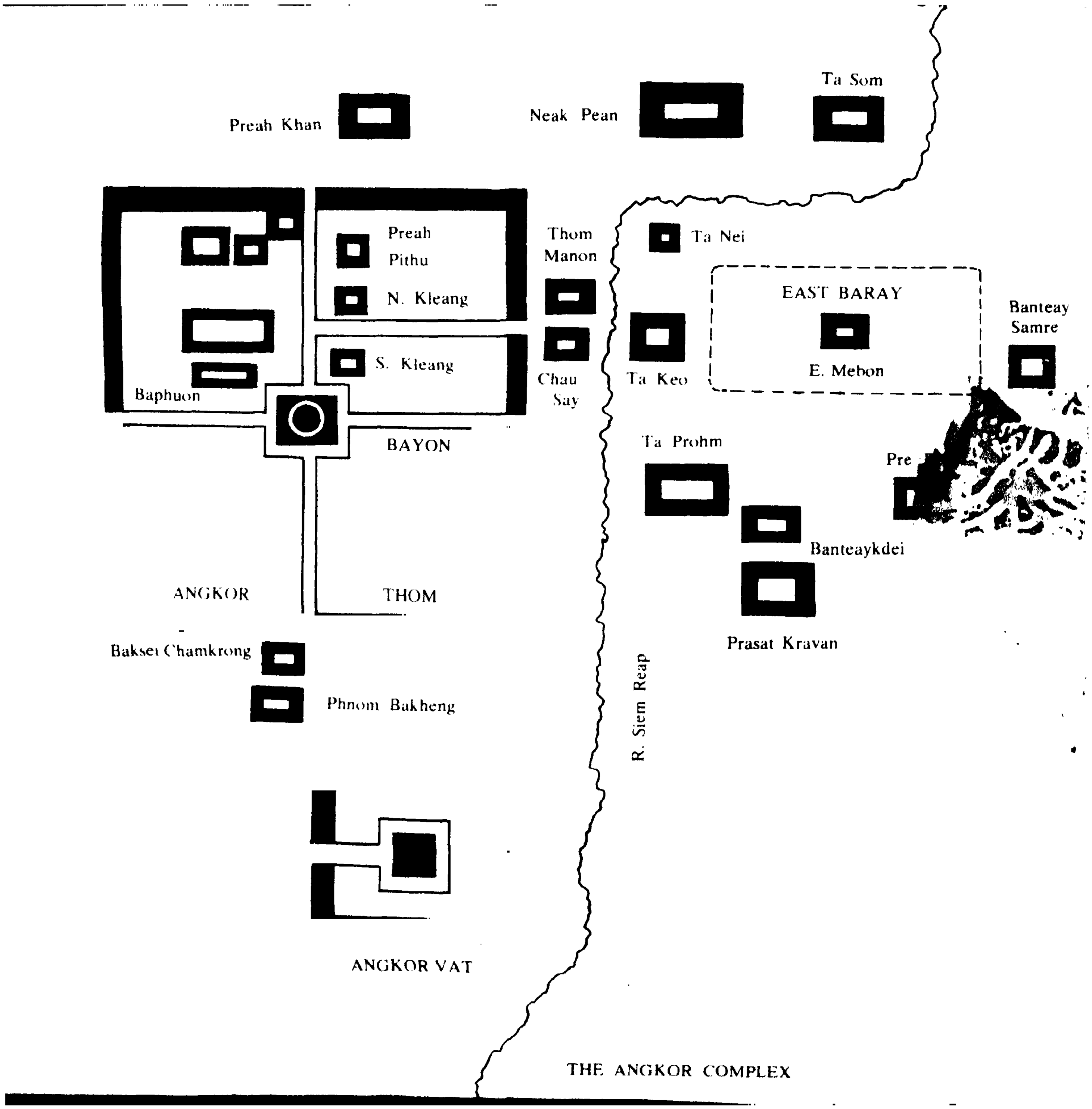
D. *Detail of an Apsara from the temple of Banteay Srei. The coy grace of the lovely princess is symbolic of the heavenly nymphs.*

E. *The Joyous nymph from the relief of Bayon.*

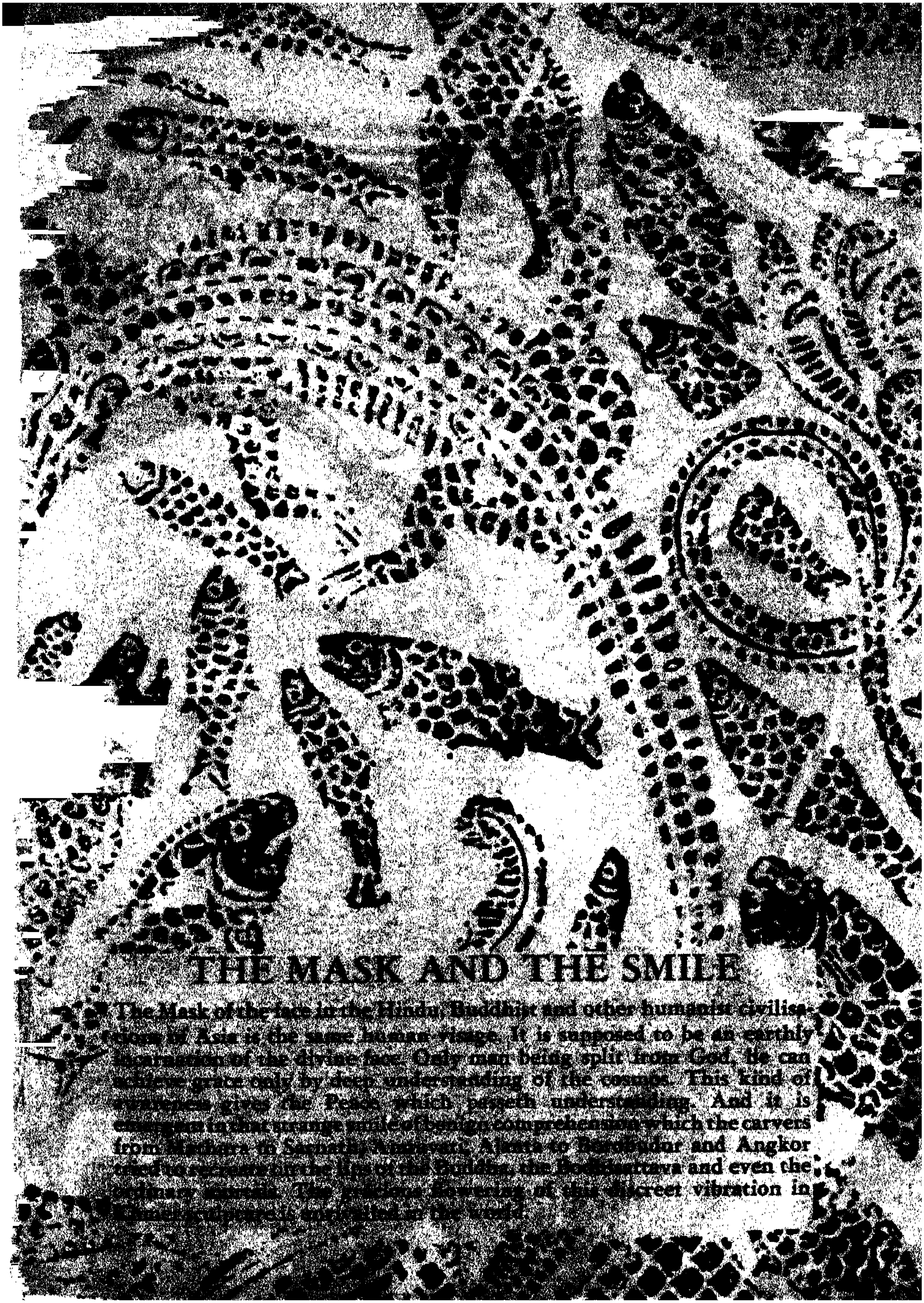
F. *Eternal Youth: An elaborately dressed nymph from the walls of Angkor.*

G. *Bodhisattava's face on one of the towers of the temple of Bayon with the radiant smile.*

H. *The energy of cosmic dance. Bronze from Phnom Penh Museum.*


Ta Som
Preah Khan
Neak Pean
Preah Pithu
N. Kleang
Thom Manon
Ta Nei
EAST BARAY
Banteay Samre
S. Kleang
Chau Say
Ta Keo
E. Mebon
Baphuon
BAYON
Ta Prohm
Pre
Banteaykdei
ANGKOR
THOM
Prasat Kravan
Baksei Chamkrong
Phnom Bakheng
R. Siem Reap
ANGKOR VAT

THE ANGKOR COMPLEX



THE MASK AND THE SMILE

The Mask of the face in the Hindu, Buddhist and other humanist civilisations of Asia is the same human visage. It is supposed to be an earthly incarnation of the divine face. Only man being split from God, he can achieve grace only by deep understanding of the cosmos. This kind of experience gives the Peace which passeth understanding. And it is contained in that strange smile of benign comprehension which the carvers from Mathura to Sarnath, Amaravati, Ajanta to Borobudur and Angkor tried to evoke on the lips of the Buddhas, the Bodhisattvas and even the ordinary mortals. The profound meaning of this discreet vibration in human countenance is unparalleled in the world.

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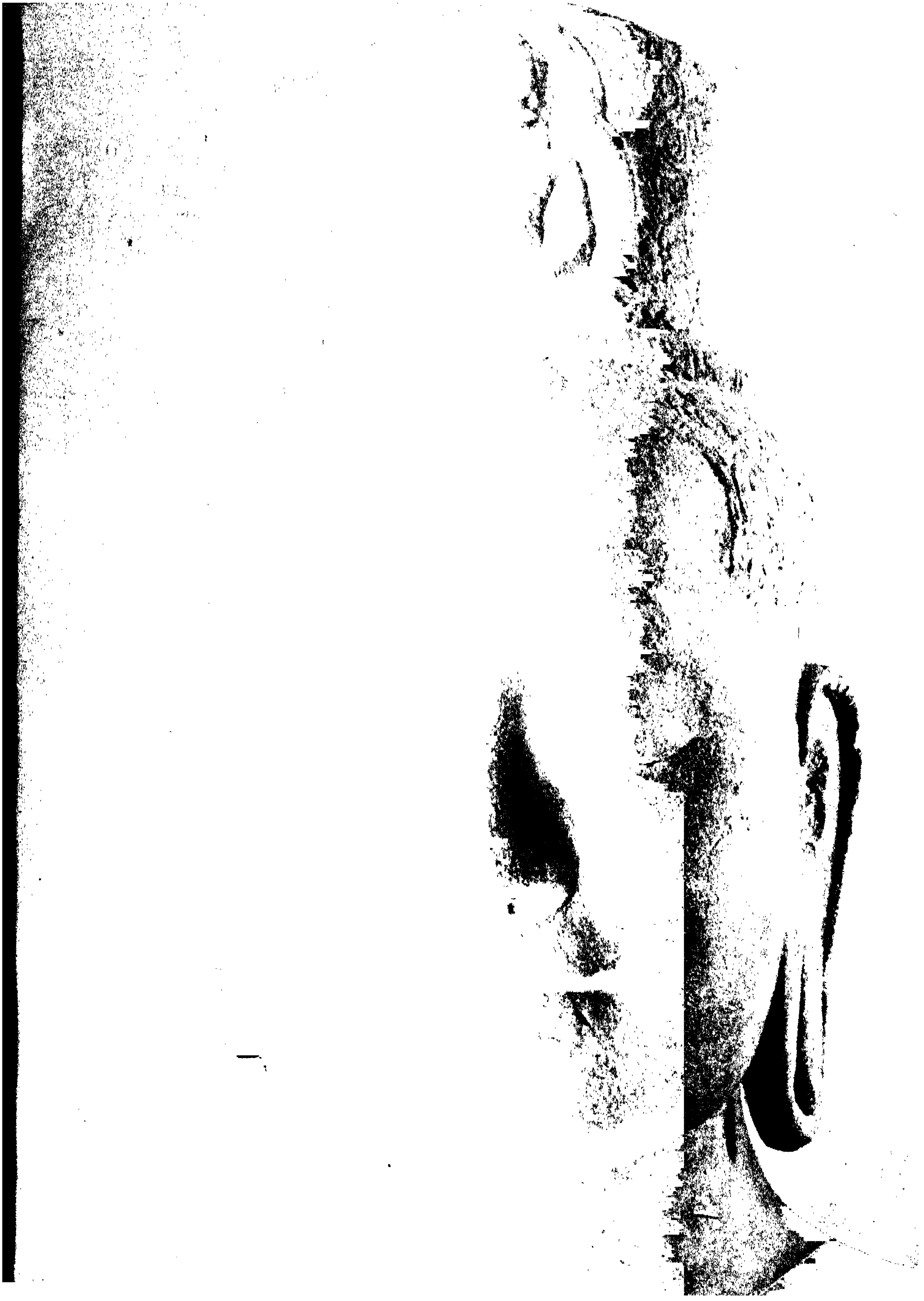
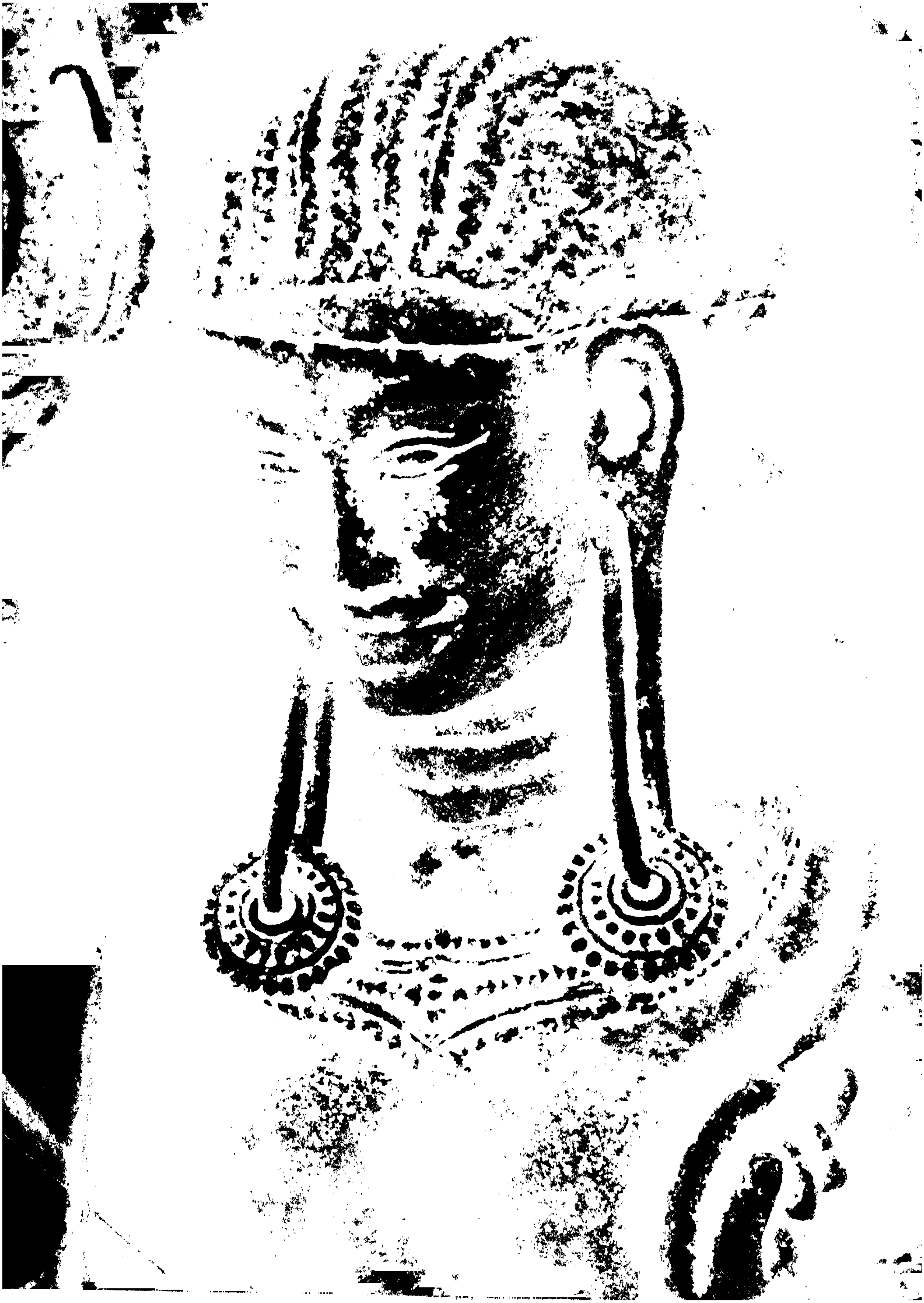
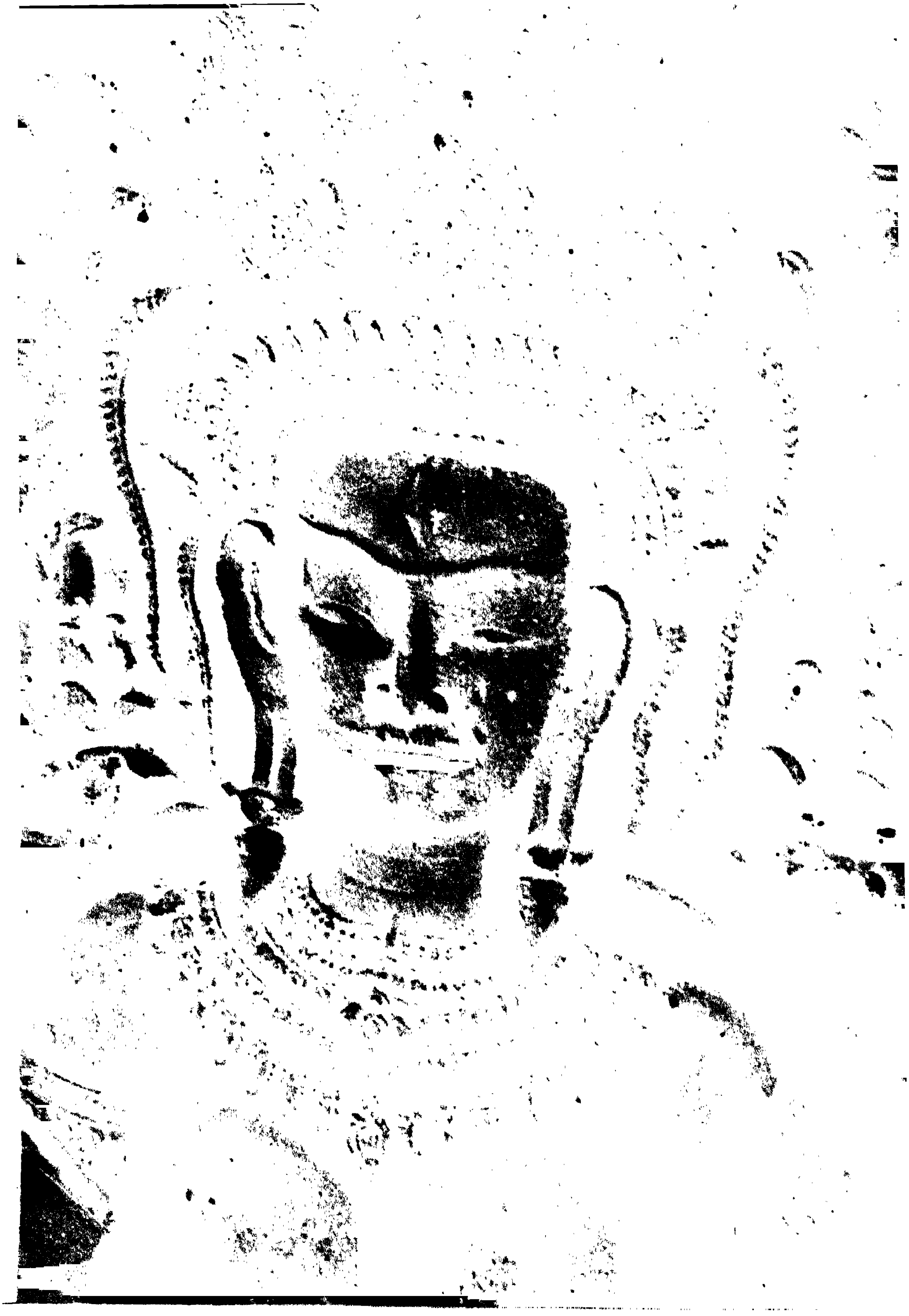
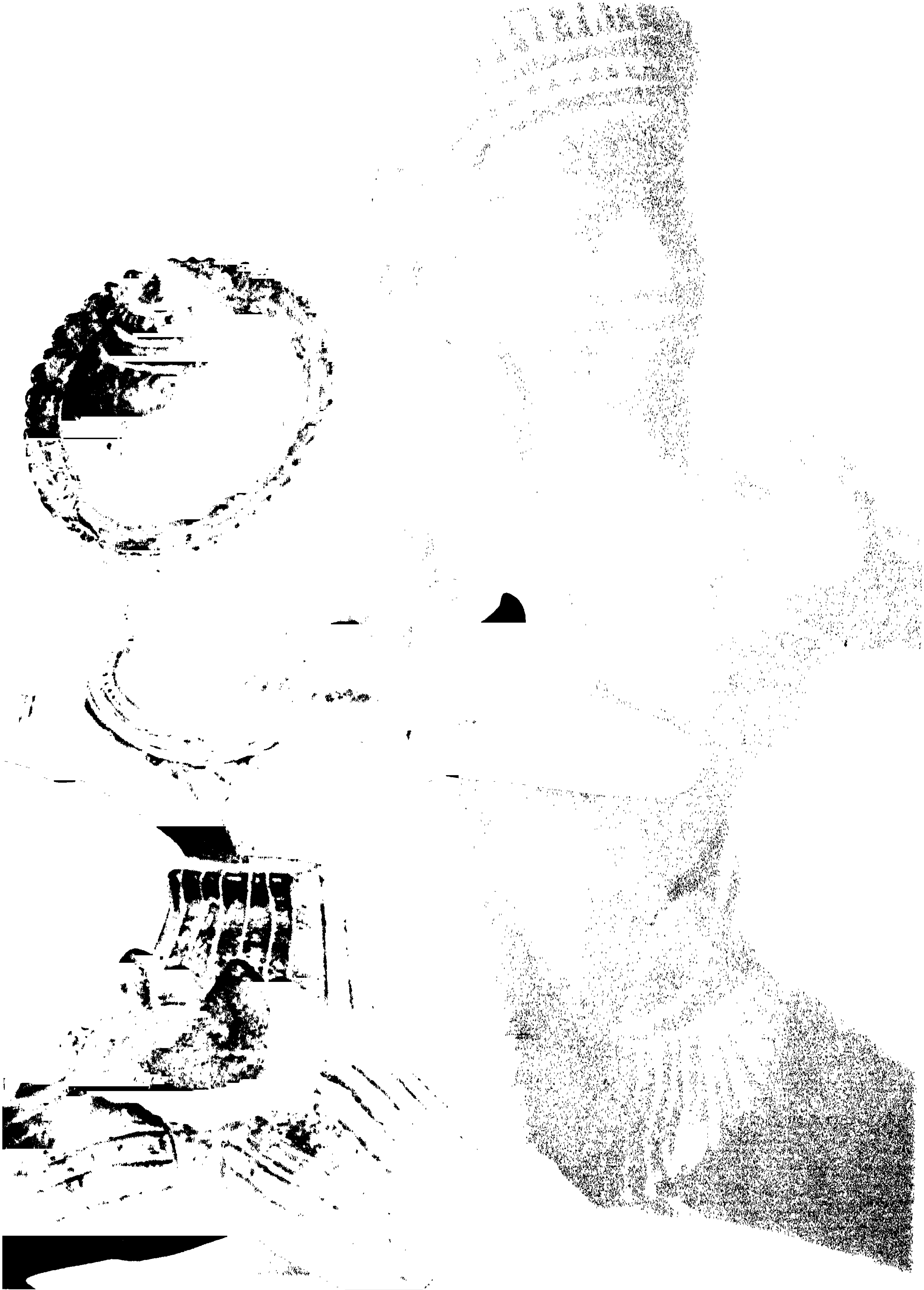








Chronology

Abridged List of Cambodian Kings

Approximate date of accessories	Name and relationship with previous name	Important monuments of the reign	Capital during the reign
	Funan Period		
1st c. A.D.	**Kaundriya — Soma**		
400	**Kaundriya II, new emigrant**		
484	**Jayavarman Kaundriya, descendant**		**Vyadhpura**
	Chenla Period (Upper Bhanla)		
500	**Srutavarman, usurper**		
545	**Sreshthavarman, son**		**Sreshthapura**
580	**Bhavavarman I, usurper**		**Bhavapura**
590	**Mahendravarman I, brother**		**Sambhupura**
610	**Isanavarman I, son**	Sambor Prei Kuk	**Isanapura**
635	**Bhavavarman II, son**		
650	**Jayavarman I, son**		
680	**Jayadevi, wife**		
	Lower Bhanla		
716	**Pushkaraksha**		
760	**Rajendravarman I, descendant**		
780	**Mahipativarman, son**		
	Angkor Period		
802	Jayavarman II, usurper	Ak Yom, Phnom Kulen	(1) Indrapura (2) Hariharalaya (3) Amarendrapura (4) Mahendra Parvata
854	Jayavarman III, son		Hariharalaya
877	Indravarman I, maternal cousin	Preah Koh, Bakong	Hariharalaya
889	Yasovarman I, son	Lolei, Preah Vihear, Phnom Bakheng	Yasodharapura
910	Harshavarman I, son	Prasat Kravan	Yasodharapura
921	Jayavarman IV, usurper, brother-in-law of Yasovarman I	Koh ker group	Chok Garggyar
944	Rajendravarman II, brother	Baksei Chamkrong, East Mebon, Pre Rup Banteay Srei begun, Phimeanakas begun	Yasodharapura
968	Jayavarman V, son	Banteay Srei completed, Takeo begun, Phimeanakas continued	Yasodharapura
1002	Suryavarman I, usurper, mother descended from Indravarman I	Ta Keo completed, Phimeanakas completed, Kleangs	(1) Preah Khan of Kompong Svai (2) Angkor
1050	Udayadityavarman II, grand nephew	Baphuon	Angkor
1080	Jayavarman VI, usurper	Beng Mea Lea, Preah Palilay	Angkor.
1107	Dharanindravarman I, brother	Preah Pithu, Chausay Tevoda, Thommanon	Angkor
1112	Suryavarman II, nephew	Banteay Samre, Preah Khan of Kompong Svai embellisher Angkor Vat begun	Angkor
1181	Jayavarman VII, cousin's son	Bayon, Banteay Chhmar, Neak Pean, Banteay Kdei, Preah Khan of Angkor Prei Prasat, Ta Prom, Ta Som Angkor Thom (senular edifices)	Angkor

The Glory that was Angkor

"I can see across centuries and a vision comes to me of a life which has left its signature in this land. That age is silent today among the torn leaves of records difficult to decipher; it is like a gem that Time has stolen away; only the casket of it lies in magnificent ruins. The heart of India once throbbed under the sunny skies of these shores and dreamed its dreams in beauty and scattered its thoughts for a rich harvest of culture in an alien land. "

Rabindranath Tagore
(His speech at Saigon on June 21, 1929)

Discovery

The glory that was Angkor! That this is not a well-worn cliche will be clear from this verdict of the latest American authority, Lawrence Palmer Briggs: "Hidden away in the jungles of the interior, until recently all unknown to the western world are mute witnesses that here man lived and toiled and ruled and wrought his dreams into magnificent stone temples and marvels of sculpture and decoration which nowhere else on earth has he ever been able to match, wonders which for combined extent, magnitude and splendour dwarf and reduce almost to commonplace the much heralded wonders of Egypt, Greece and Rome".[1]

The name 'Angkor' derived from the Sanskrit word 'Nagara' (city) is the local modern name of a vast complex of ruined temples in the dense jungles of Cambodia that were deserted five hundred years ago. But Cambodia's reverent memory of Angkor is now enshrined in the figure of three spires of Angkor Vat in her national flag.

Ever since the French naturalist Henri Mouhot published his book on his travels in South-East Asia in 1864, over twentyfive monographs and sixty magazine articles appeared in English on the architectural and sculptural wonders of Cambodia. The number of books and magazine articles in French exceeds one thousand. Still the name Angkor is not well known in advanced countries and even in India. Louis Finot called ancient Cambodia the daughter of India forgotten by her mother.[2]

Fusion of Cultures

The fusion of Indian culture with the indigenous culture of South-East Asia produced amazing results. Giant shrines with record lengths of stone sculpture telling the stories of Indian lore came into being in lands far away from India. The like of these are not found even in the mother country. But the physiognomy of the human and divine figures depicted in the sculptures is unmistakably of the local ethnic types. And yet if we look at a photograph of an ancient Cambodian temple, we can hardly believe that it is a Siva or Vishnu temple. We would also be astonished if we are told that the princes, princesses, nobles and priests there had Sanskrit names, that they issued charters in classical Sanskrit and that they led a secular and religious life as in ancient India.

How is it that the vestiges of this culture are not easily recognizable by us?

The answer is to be sought in the fact that the original culture on which Indian culture was superimposed retained its individuality through its inherent strength and through the passive and unobtrusive nature of the new culture.

Centuries ago the proud and sophisticated possessors of that culture deserted their sanctuaries and palaces after political decay set in. The all-enveloping tropical jungle took over. During the last hundred years there was no foreign visitor who was not moved at the sight of the grandest achievements of human mind and muscle lying overpowered by relentless Nature.

Background

What were the antecedents and background which produced the unique cultural phenomenon that was Angkor? Culture, like the vegetable kingdom, is what the soil and atmosphere make it. The river Mekong (meaning the great or Mother Ganga) was to Cambodia what the Ganges was to India and the Nile to ancient Egypt. A perennial river, the longest in South-East Asia (2800 miles), it rises in the snowy heights of Tibet and is fed also by copious rainfall. Aided by tropical climate, Mekong has been contributing to the uncontrollable growth of the vegetable and animal kingdom of Cambodia. Rice, the staple food was cultivated in its basin three times a year. The monsoonic inundation of the deltaic region converts the confluence of the Tonle Sap river and the Mekong into a vast lake (1000 miles by 30 miles) and yields on its subsidence millions of fish and other water fauna. The Mekong delta is among the most fertile and advantageous regions of the whole world. Through the centuries the forest and mineral wealth of Cambodia has been providing raw material for the technological activities for which the people developed aptitudes through the rule of a few enlightened kings and the industrious folk.

Prehistory

Little wonder that the fertile Tonle Sap region drew settlers from neolithic times. According to prehistorians, a new stone age culture called Samrong Sen Culture (after the locality of that name near Tonle Sap) was flourishing there from 2500 B.C. to 500 B.C. It was characterized by what are called the 'Cord marked and Mat Spiral' pottery, bone arrows and the 'shouldered' axe (celt). It was a type of Austro-Asiatic Culture (in prehistoric parlance) in which plants were cultivated and the pig was domesticated. The name 'Mon-Khmer' was formerly applied to the Austro-Asiatic people, who are stated to have moved east from India, the Mons settling down in Siam and the Khmers in Cambodia. The absence of Mongoloid elements in this culture accounts for the fact that the Chinese had, from earliest times, been treating the Cambodians as foreigners.

Early Accounts

Before Mouhot brought to the notice of the Western world the existence of magnificent relics of an old culture in the Cambodian jungle, they were vaguely referred to in the travel notes of French, Spanish and Portuguese missionaries. In 1601, Marcello Ribadeneyra, a Spanish writer mentioned in his book on the Malay archipelago that there were ruins of a city in Cambodia, built by Greeks or Romans. A French missionary P. Bovillevaux published in 1858 an account of his visit to Angkor. Scientific interest in the Cambodian monuments was first evinced by the Geographic Society of London. It was this Society that sent not only Mouhot, but also two other explorers D.O. King and H. G. Kennedy who sent the reports of their exploration in 1859 and 1866 respectively. The American Geographic Society also published the accounts of two visitors to Angkor—J.G.G. D'Abain (1875) and Frank Vincent (1878). The scientist that he was, Mouhot prepared during his three week stay at Angkor, plans and elevations of the monuments to supplement his vivid descriptions. Indeed he may be said to have blazed the trail for the innumerable enthusiasts from Europe—Civil and Military officers, connoisseurs, scholars and collectors. No other antiquities of the world have been subjected to such a systematic and thorough research as the Cambodian monuments by the art-minded French scholars. It was by a happy chance that the task fell on their shoulders as Cambodia happened to be a French protectorate.

French Researchers

The extraordinarily brisk research activity of the French savants commenced from the time of an Army officer Captain Etienne Aymonier, verily the father of Cambodian archaeological studies. A succession of brilliant specialists (Abel Bergaigne, Auguste Barth, George Coedes, Henri Parmentier, Remusat Gilberte de Coral, Louis Finot, Victor Goloubew, Georges Groslier, Henri Marchal, Paul Pelliot and Philippe Stern) brought out monumental works covering every aspect of Cambodian studies, most of them under the renowned French school of the Far East (Ecole Francaise d'Extreme—Orient).

The ancient culture of Cambodia seems, from these researches, to have been flourishing from the first century A.D., to the fourth decade of the fifteenth century. At the height of its power its empire covered an area vaster than modern Cambodia. It stretched from the valley of the Menam to Saigon and from the Vientiane to the gulf of Thailand. It included the eastern part of Thailand and southern of Laos. Over this wide area hundreds of ancient Cambodian monuments lie scattered. There are in modern Cambodia alone 450 such monuments. During the long period of over fourteen centuries, fifty-four sovereigns, bearing Sanskrit names and the royal surname 'Varman'[3] ruled Cambodia. They belonged to eight dynasties as there were seven usurpers. It is difficult to prepare intelligible genealogical trees as the different lines of rulers were linked to each other by intermarriages and as there were intermarriages between the royal and priestly families. For various reasons the capital was shifted fifteen times before the king moved permanently to Phnom Penh.[4] The kings recorded their charters in Sanskrit in the fashion of their Indian contemporaries. Over 900 inscriptions on stone in Sanskrit and the local Khmer language have been discovered and edited by French savants. Of these, 274 ones in Sanskrit found at 116 places possess historical value.[5]

Pallava Parallels

The title 'Varman' is of tell-tale significance. Though some rulers of Central India (the Chandela Yasovarman, the Ganga Konguni Varman and the Western Chalukya Kirtivarman) assumed it, it was the Pallava line that invariably adopted it. The use of Pallava Grantha script in Cambodian inscriptions points to the influence of Pallava culture in Cambodia. An early monument of Cambodia, the tiny stone temple of Sambor Prei Kuk[6] erected by Isana Varman I (c. 611-635 A.D.) has a cornice containing leaf-shaped windows with human heads (called 'kudus' in Tamil) which is identical with those in early Pallava shrines in South India, such as the Satrumallesvara cave shrine at Dalavanur[7] in South Arcot district of Mahendravarman I (c. 580-630 A.D.). This 'kudu' is in reality an adaptation of what is called the 'gavaksha' or circular window in Buddhist edifices with a human figure inside it as at Amaravati.

Legendary Beginnings

We do not know much about Cambodian culture in the early centuries of this era. Neither literary works, nor stone inscriptions, of this period have come down to us. Manuscripts in palm-leaves and buildings in wood perished long ago from causes, natural and man-made. From Chinese accounts historians have inferred that a powerful kingdom called Funan flourished on both sides of the lower Mekong as far south as the sea. A curious legend reported by the Chinese attributed the founding of the kingdom to a foreigner who sailed to this country, ruled by a queen whom he conquered and married. The name 'Funan' is believed to be the Sinicized form of 'Phnom', the Khmer word for a mountain. This legend is supposed to refer to an event recorded in a late Sanskrit inscription (of the seventh century) in a place called Mison, about the establishment of Bhavapura, the capital of Kambuja. "It was there", the inscription says, "that the great Brahman Kaundinya planted the javelin which he had received from Asvatthaman, the son of Drona. There was a daughter of the Naga king of the name Soma who founded a royal race. The great Kaundinya married her".[8] In the genealogy of the Pallava kings detailed in two of their inscriptions their descent from Naga princesses is mentioned. In the first inscription the Pallava progenitor Skandasishya is the son of Asvatthaman, the son of Drona and a Nagi. In the second, Skandasishya is the son of king Virakurcha and a Nagi.[9]

Tamil Legend

In early Tamil literature the Nagi legend finds a place. The Tamil Buddhist epic (assigned to the early centuries) tells this story.[10] When it was spring, the Chola king Nedumudikkilli met a beautiful damsel in his seaside garden. After living with him there for a month she left him unnoticed. An angel told him that his sweetheart, a Naga princess, would not return to him and that his son by her would come to him. From her island home she sent the son with a seaman. But his vessel was wrecked in a storm. The story in the epic stops with the shipwreck and does not say that the prince came to his father. The commentator of another early Tamil poem (PERUMPANARRUPPADAI) sung in honour of a king of Kanchi called Ilam-Tiraivan (Prince of Waves) says that its royal hero was the son of the Naga princess by the Chola king.

A late Cambodian legend has the following theme. One of the sons of king Aditya Varman of Indraprastha was banished by the father. During his wanderings he came to the Kambuja country. On the seashore he met a princess of enchanting loveliness. She was the daughter of a Naga king, who gave her in marriage to the prince and presented the Kambuja country as her dowry.[11] The account of a Chinese visitor of the thirteenth century (Chou Ta kuon) records a fantastic legend. "In the palace", says the account, "there is a golden tower at the top of which is the bed chamber of the king. The natives say that there exists in the tower the spirit of a serpent with nine hoods which owns the whole kingdom. Every night it appears in the form of a woman".[12] A ruined pyramidal structure in Angkor Thom called Phimeanakas (the Khmer expression for Vimana-Akas meaning the aerial tower) is pointed to by popular tradition as this enchanted bed chamber. Savants think that the monument must have been a shrine and not a palace. Liaisons with Naga princesses seem to have been the much cherished fantasy of ancient legend makers in South India and Cambodia.

Funan

Since the first century Indian vessels seem to have brought numerous emigrants to the Cambodian shores — learned men and nobles and merchants, all evidently unaccompanied by their women folk. Later epigraphs mention the capital of Funan as Vyadhapura (or the city of hunters). The Chinese records refer to the arrival of another Indian celebrity of the same name who overthrew the ruler of the Kaundinya-Soma line in the fifth century. The Chinese Chronicle says: "Kaundinya, a Brahman of India heard a supernatural voice telling him: 'You must go and reign in Funan'. The people of Funan heard of him. The whole kingdom was stirred with joy. They chose him king. He changed all the rules according to the methods of India". In the long run this second Kaundinya did not eclipse the memory of his earlier namesake because, the progenitorship of Kaundinya-Soma has continued to be a living tradition till modern times as the hallowed pair is invoked in the wedding ritual of Cambodia.[13] A successor of the second Kaundinya called Jayavarman Kaundinya is reported to have sent at the end of the fifth century an Indian Buddhist monk by name Sakya Nagasena to the Chinese court with presents. Perhaps the earliest Sanskrit inscription in Cambodia is that of this Jayavarman, discovered in the recent past at a place called Neak Ta Dambeng Dek in the Funan region and edited by Coedes. The contents of this inscription[14] prove that Hindu religious practices even by queens had come to stay in that country at that early period. It records the donation of a hermitage (asrama) and a tank (tataka) and a dwelling (alaya) by Kulaprabhavati, the chief queen of king Jayavarman (c. 484 A.D.)

Chenla

North of Funan was a vassal state known to the Chinese as Chenla, which wrested the power from Funan in the sixth century. This is a significant event as it is from the progenitor of the Chenla rulers that the Khmer people derived their famous name Kambuja, gallicized as Cambodge and Anglicized as Cambodia. The Khmer legend says that a royal sage of India, Kambu Svayambhuva who lost his semi-divine spouse — the apsara Mera — arrived in Chenla which was then an arid desert. The Naga king of Chenla gave his daughter in marriage to him and miraculously turned the entire barren land into a beautiful and fertile country. Whereas the Kaundinya Soma line was called the lunar one after the name Soma (which meant the moon), sage Kambu's offspring or Kambujas (i.e., those born of Kambu) were considered to be of the solar line, as the sage claimed his descent from the sun. This tradition also indicates the extent to which the beliefs and ideas of ancient India spread in South-East Asia. (The Hindu puranic tradition of solar and lunar lines is itself suspect, but that is a different matter).

Sanskrit classics

With the debut of Kambu's offspring we enter upon fairly stable epochs for which authentic historical material is available. An early Kambuja inscription throws interesting light not only on the intensification of religious activity but also on the intermarriage of royal and priestly families.

The Sanskrit inscription of Bhavavarma I (c. 580) at VEAL KANTEL, records the consecration of the Tribhuvanesvara shrine and the presentation thereto of a complete set of the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and a Purana for daily reading. The donor was a Brahman scholar, Soma Sarman, the husband of the king's sister, described as the foremost of those versed in the Sama Veda. The princess has been praised as a second Arundhati in wifely devotion.[15]

According to the Chinese accounts two dynasties ruled at the same time in two regions called upper Chenla and lower Chenla in the eighth century which was a dark period in Cambodian history. This political division is corroborated by the inscriptions of the next century which give the genealogy of the two lines, one ruling from Sambhupura in the north and the other Vyadhapura in the south. The two lines were, however, united by Rajendravarman (760 A.D.) who inherited Sambhupura from his father and Vyadhapura from his mother who was a princess of the southern line. Cambodia seems to have soon come under the powerful influence of Java. Rajendravarman's son, Mahipativarman, is on the strength of an Arab merchant's report, thought to have been killed at the instance of the Javanese ruler. The Javanese ruler is said to have allowed the offer of the crown to a Cambodian prince who had been living in his court. Descended from the Kaundinya-Soma line, he was the great Jayavarman II (802). From his time began the golden age of Cambodian architecture whose esoteric significance was funerary.

Jayavarman II

Jayavarman II was a far-seeing statesman of remarkable capacity. Ruling for half a century he is recorded to have shifted his capital (obviously for strategic reasons) four times and married four wives—all of priestly stock. He was quick to free himself from Javanese yoke by a magical religious rite -that of the cult of the Divine King which was indeed the secret of the erection of temples by every ruler from his time. The famous inscription in Sanskrit and Khmer of Sdok Kak Thom[16] refers to it thus: 'His Majesty came from Java to reign at Indrapura. Sivakaivalya the venerable and wise guru became the royal purohita....Then a Brahman came from Janapada. His Majesty invited him to draw up a ritual so that Kambujadesa might no longer be dependent on Java. The Brahman composed a ritual according to the Vinasika and consecrated the Devaraja. Then he taught Sivakaivalya to carry on the ritual". Among his queens, Kambujalakshmi was the younger sister of his guru, Sivakaivalya, while Bhasvamini was the daughter of a Vaishnava Brahman. The guru of the later ruler, Suryavarman I called Yogisvarapandita is said to have been a descendant of Bhasvamini. Besides founding the Devaraja cult, another epoch making contribution of Jayavarman II was the commencement of massive stone shrines such as those seen by him in Java.

Adi-Sankara's Pupil

After Jayavarman II, came his son Jayavarman III who was followed by his cousin, Indravarman I (877 A.D.). The wife of Indravarman was Indradevi, descended from the Brahman Agastya who came from Aryadesa and married a princess, Yasomati. Indravarman's guru was Sivasoma, a learned Brahman and cousin of Jayavarman II, who founded a Sivasrama (or Saiva monastery). An inscription declares that the sastras had been taught to him by Bhagavat Sankara who, according to Coedes was the reputed philosopher of reformed Hinduism.[17] Indravarman's son Yasovarman I (889 A.D.) was formerly thought by scholars to have been a king of outstanding achievements and the author of the best of the Angkor monuments including Angkor Vat and the Bayon. This happened through a misinterpretation of historical material. In the tenth century a succession of kings who were not as brilliant as Yasovarman I ruled Cambodia. They continued his building activity.

Jayavarman V

Cambodian culture may be said to have reached greater heights in the long and peaceful reign of Jayavarman V (968 A.D.). Like Vikramaditya and Bhoja, he was surrounded by intellectuals, poets and scholars. Ladies of royal and priestly families not only participated freely in learned gatherings like Gargi and Maitreyi (as evidenced by Brihadaranyaka Upanishad), but they also served as chiefs or monasteries and held high positions in State administration and judiciary. In no other part of the world even in modern times, womanhood was so enlightened and was in such exalted positions in political, religious and social life as in medieval Cambodia. That loveliest of Cambodian shrines—Banteay Srei (meaning the citadel of women in later popular parlance) shows that aesthetically also, his epoch was apogean. It was once erroneously taken to be a later construction (of the fourteenth century). It is really the work of Yajnavaraha, the priest of Jayavarman V. Gifts to it have also been recorded in the name of the priest's sister, Jahnavi. But the most interesting is the account of the benefactions of the king's own sister, Indralakshmi and her Brahman spouse Divakara Bhatta who hailed from the banks of Yamuna in India. The long Preah Einkosei inscription[18] of Jayavarman V in Sanskrit says: "The younger sister of this king of far-spread renown, the daughter of king Rajendravarman—Indralakshmi, wife of the illustrious Brahman has erected lovingly the image of her own mother in the year 890 (Saka). The son-in-law of king Rajendravarman and the brother-in-law of Jayavarman, the deva Bhatta Divakara, having set up in the Madhuvana three divinities, consecrated them to Bhadresvara. Having provided a carriage of gold and other precious objects, glittering with wonderful ornaments presented with abundant land, silver, copper, gold, cattle, slaves, female slaves, buffaloes, horses and elephants and having made Bhadresvara the sole possessor of all of them, the deva Divakara ordered rice to be given yearly for food to those who came to this place". The inscription describes the birth place of Divakara thus: "There, where the lovely Kalindi (Yamuna) flows, where the land echoes with the mantras of the Rik, Yajus and Sama hymns; where Krishna who trampled the black snake, the destroyer of the Daitvas, played in his childhood, there was born this deva, the Bhatta called Divakara". It may be recalled that intermarriages between royal and priestly families were common in the age of the Rig Veda.

Suryavarman I

The first half of the eleventh century was a period of prosperity and creative activity under the great Suryavarman I. He was not related to Jayavarman V, but his mother was descended from Indravarman I. In his admirable town-planning and irrigation schemes he had no peers. He seems to have analysed the causes of disaffection among his subjects. He prescribed the following oath of allegiance to be taken by his ministers and officers: "We shall not honour any other king. We shall never be hostile to our king. We shall not be accomplices of an enemy. We shall not seek to injure him in any way. We pledge ourselves to perform all actions which are the fruit of our grateful devotion towards him. If there is war we pledge ourselves to fight faithfully in his cause without valuing our lives. We shall not fly from the battlefield"[19]. Suryavarman seems to have been a Buddhist as his posthumous name was Nirvanapada. He has been described in an inscription (of Preah Khan) thus: "Suryavarman the protector of learning, had founded a college, the interior of which was devoted to the cult of truth and goodness and the exterior to the cult of beauty".[20]

Kingmaker

A noteworthy feature of Cambodian life was that the vicissitude conditions of the palace did not upset the continuity of the cultural activities of the ruler and his courtiers and the enlightened social circles under the unifying influence of learned priestly counsellors. History does not obviously have a kingmaker like Divakarapandita who crowned as many as four sovereigns—Harshavarman, Jayavarman VI, Dharanindravarman I and Suryavarman II. None of them had a rightful claim. The kingmaker was a pious sacrificer and big donor who dug tanks and gave benefactions to temples and monasteries. An inscription of his time (at Ban That) dealing with the management of the Bhadresvara shrine contains this interesting account of a learned lady who was in ancestress of the hereditary priest: "In her youth the lady Tilaka had beauty most excellent, coupled with right conduct. By the elders, the royal gurus and the most learned, she was honoured publicly and proclaimed as Vagesvari (the goddess of learning). In contests of learning she was reckoned foremost and decked with jewels. She became the wife of the devout Namasivaya. Their son, Subhadra became famous as a pandita in the court of Jayavarman VI. Subhadra was well versed in the three Vedas, the Saiva scriptures, the philosophical systems—Nyaya, Sankhya and Vaiseshika, the Sabdasastras of Panini and the Bhashya of Patanjali. By the perfection of his merits, like Yajnavalkya at the court of Janaka he eclipsed all the learned even from his youth. The king conferred on him successively the posts of inspector of religious establishments and of arbitrator of disputes among the nobility in religious and civil matters".[21]

Suryavarman II and Jayavarman VII

We now come to Suryavarman II, one of the greatest of Cambodian sovereigns who waged many wars and built many temples. He designed and commenced that supreme marvel of Cambodian architecture—the Angkor Vat, rightly considered to be a wonder of the world. The scenes of his court life and warfare have been sculptured on the walls of that temple. Suryavarman II was followed by his cousin Dharanindravarman who was a Mahayana Buddhist. After his brief rule, there was a *coup d'etat.* There was a legitimate heir who was a zealous Buddhist and who withdrew from the scene in disgust. When after a time the country was torn by external aggression and internal anarchy, the prince stepped in and routed the invading Chams and restored order in the country. He was Jayavarman VII. He was a mature man of 50 when he took over the government and for 34 years he strove to make Cambodia once more prosperous and glorious after it was pillaged by the Chams. Besides his indefatigable architectural activity, he constructed all over the wide country, hospitals and roads and rest houses. Like Suryavarman II he caused the contemporary scenes of Cambodian life to be depicted in the bas-reliefs of the enigmatic and quaint creation of his—the Bayon. A peculiarity of his inscriptions is that they present revealing statistics of the country's economy. For instance, the following figures have been given in respect of the religious and medical establishments.[22]

District hospitals (arogysala-Vishaye-Vishaye)	102
Shrines (devalayas)	798
Contributing villages	838
Men and women in service	81,640
Yearly contribution of rice in Kharikas	1,17,200

(A Kharika is equal to 3 maunds and 8 seers)

Jayavarman's edict on hospitals reads like one of Asoka: *"Full of deep sympathy for the good of the world, the king expresses this wish; all the souls who are plunged in the ocean of existence, may I be able to rescue them by virtue of this good work. May all the kings of Cambodia, devoted to the right, carry on my foundation and attain for themselves, their wives, officials and friends, a holiday of deliverance in which there will never be any sickness".*[23] His altruistic sentiment is expressed in a telling way in a verse: *"The bodily pain of the diseased became to him a mental agony more tormenting than the former. For the real pain of the king is the pain of his subjects, not that of his own body".* Such was the character of Jayavarman VII, one of the greatest of kings that crowd the columns of history. An impressive portrait sculpture of a saintlike personage in the museum of Phnom Penh is believed to be his statue.

Decline

After him the fortunes of his country were downgrade on account of causes, direct and deep-rooted. the colossal expenditure of labour and wealth necessary for the maintenance of hundreds of giant temples could not be borne by his successors. The lack of popular interest in the god-king cult, the popularity of the austere Hinayana monks, the stoppage of influx, into the country, of learned men with missionary zeal from India, the weakness of the rulers themselves and the repeated invasions of the Thais and the Annamites—these were the other causes that led to the rapid decline of Cambodia. When in 1431, the Thais sacked Angkor, the fateful decision was taken by the Cambodian ruler to move to a humble principality in the east (Phnom Penh) leaving the countless centres of ancient splendour for good.

Culture Influence: Language and Literature

Hindu influence in South-East Asia was the greatest in Cambodia. In general character and customs and manners the Cambodians are even today more akin to the Hindus of India than their neighbours. The letters of the Khmer language were derived from the old South Indian alphabet. Such a large number of Sanskrit words in all branches of learning (religious, secular, legal, administrative, geographical and scientific) have been adapted by the Khmer language that Aymonier has declared that an entire dictionary of words of Sanskrit derivation in current use in the Khmer language can be prepared. In the adaptation of Sanskrit words, certain clear-cut principles have been noticed by savants, (for instance, the Sanskrit *ga* is changed to *ka, da* to *ta*, *ja* to *cha*, *va* to *pa* and so on). In the changed forms most of the words tended to become monosyllabic and the vowel was also omitted. In the word 'nagara' the first letter was omitted and the consonant of the second syllable was nasalized. Thus the word 'nagara' became 'angkor'. Despite the amusing tongue-twisting the changed words bore some resemblance to the originals.[24]

Most of the Sanskritists of the world are not aware of the wealth of poetic composition in the hundreds of Sanskrit inscriptions of Cambodia in flawless Kavya style. Sanskrit was taught to the princes by the gurus of the palace who were also their kinsmen. Some of the princes like Jayavarman II, Yasovarman I and Suryavarman I are stated to have been sound scholars. All the common metres have been employed in the inscriptions. They bespeak an intimate acquaintance with not only the grammatical words of Panini and Patanjali, the four Vedas, the Manava dharma sastra, the two epics, and many kavyas but also with special branches of knowledge—the Siddhantas (mathematics and astronomy), the Darsanas (systems of philosophy), Vatsyayana's Kamasutra and Susruta's medical treatise. Even little known names in classical literature are alluded to. The engravers of the inscriptions were master-calligraphists. The finish and elegance of the letters are similar to those of Asoka's famous Rummindei pillar edict.

Role of Asramas

The Asramas (monasteries) appear to have played a great role in Cambodian life. Inscriptions record the regulations laid down by the king for their maintenance. An epigraph sums up: *"All these things, which the king Yasovarman has given to the asrama—men, women, pearls, gold, silver, cows, horses, buffaloes, elephants, gardens etc., should not be taken away by any king or anybody else. The ascetic who is appointed as the head of the asrama should always offer food, drink, and betel and do all the duties, as for example, offering welcome to guests, such as brahmanas, children of kings, ministers, leaders of the army, ascetics and the best among the common people".*[25] Asramas also served as sanctuaries for innocent fugitives as seen from this passage in another inscription. *"If innocent persons came to seek in the arsama a refuge in their fright, they were not to be handed over to the persecutor and he was not to seize them. No one should be killed there. Inoffensive creatures were not to be killed in the vicinity of the asrama or the lake. A king's daughter, grand-daughter, old ladies of the palace and chaste women were to be honoured there as other guests. Women known to be of bad conduct were not to be allowed to enter even if they came to seek refuge".*[26]

Religion

The invocation to Seshasayana Vishnu in the Funan inscription of queen Kulaprabhavati noticed above indicates that Vaishnavism was flourishing in the early centuries. About the same time Saivism and Buddhism were also popular according to Chinese accounts. The images of Siva and Uma, Vishnu and Lakshmi, Krishna, Ganesa and Skanda testify to the popularity of these deities. Suryavarman I and Jayavarman II are known to have patronised Mahayana Buddhism. Malcolm MacDonald graphically describes how the Hinayana Buddhists came to own Angkor Vat in the recent past: "As the villagers hunted in the forest, they stumbled now and then, to their astonishment on massive buildings hidden amongst thick-growing gigantic trees. A group of Buddhist priests recognising the sacred nature of the vast edifice of Angkor Vat settled in huts close by and began to mumble prayers in its cloisters. But they were just handfuls of country yokels and unworldly ascetics, ignorant of history and archaeology".[27] The interesting features of Cambodian Hinduism were the worship of Siva's feet in the same way as Vishnu's in India and the association of linga (the cosmic symbol of Siva in India) with Vishnu also. An inscription (of Vat Prei Var) refers to the installation of the linga of Vishnu-Isa.[28]

Besides the apotheosis of kings and queens, revered priests were also deified. For instance, Udayadityavarman consecrated a linga called Jayendravarmesvara in honour of his living preceptor, Jayendravarman.[29] We are familiar with the practice of South Indian rulers giving their own names to the temples built by them (e.g., Rajasimhesvara and Paramesvara Vishnugriha at Kanchi and Rajarajesvara at Tanjore).

There is no evidence in Cambodia of the worship of Durga in her terrific aspect or of secret Sakti cults of repulsive practices as in India. A distinguishing and laudable character of the temple sculptures is the absence of any exhibitionism of female form or erotic scenes as in India. The temples were places of study as prominent parts of them were allotted to libraries of manuscripts. As in South India, endowments were made to the temples and full details of the grants have been given in the inscriptions. Even the names of the dancing and singing girls have been recorded. Charumati, Priyasena, Arunamati, Madanapriya, Samarasena, and Vasantamallika were dancers; Tanvangi, Gunadhari, Dayitavati, Sarangi, Payodhari, Ratimati, Stanottari, Ratibindu, Manovati, Sakhipriya, Medhurasena, Gandhini, and Vinayavati were singers. Majumdar comments on these names thus: "The personal names of dancing and musician girls, laying great stress on their physical charms are very interesting relics of the fashions of old times, of which we have no exact counterparts in Indian literary records".[30]

Names of Monuments

G. B. Walker says: "We do not know the real names of most of the Khmer monuments and there is no authority for many of the modern names given to them. In most instances arbitrary and fantastic titles have been bestowed on the sanctuaries, based on vague traditions and fantastic associations. The titles are, nevertheless, Cambodian and somehow apt."[31] Wherever there are Sanskrit inscriptions they do give us the contemporary names of the sancturies like Bhadresvara. Even in India temples are known today mostly by the popular names and not the names given to them by the builders. For instance, the Rajarajesvara temple at Tanjore is known only as the big temple.

References and Notes

[1] The Ancient Khmer Empire, Philadelphia, 1951,p. 3.

[2] The Indian Historical Quarterly, 1925, p. 599.

[3] For instance, Jayavarman, Srutavarman, Sreshthavarman, Rudravarman, Bhavavarman, Mahendravarman, Isanavarman, Indravarman, Yasovarman, Harshavarman, Rajendravarman, Suryavarman, Udayadityavarman, Nripatindravarman, Dharanindravarman, Tribhuvanadityavarman.

[4] Vyadhapura, Sreshthapura, Bhavapura, Sambhupura, Isanapura, Aninditapura, Indrapura, Hariharalaya, Amarendrapura, Mahendraparvata, Chok Gargyar, Yasodharapura, Preah Khan of Kompong Svai, Jayasri, Angkor.

[5] The historical inscriptions in Sanskrit were recorded in the following centuries: 6th century 34; 7th century 40; 8th century 7; 9th century 51; 10th century 57; 11th century 62; 12th century 23.

[6] Figure 9 on p. 74 of L.P. Briggs, op. cit.

[7] Plate XL-A of article, 'The Pallava Architecture of South India,' Ancient India, No. 14 (1958).

[8] Bulletin of Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, IV, p. 923.

[9] BEFEO XI,p. 393.

[10] Manimekhalai, XXIV, lines 27 ff.

[11] B. R. Chatterji, Indian Cultural Influence in Cambodia, Calcutta, 1928, p. 4.

[12] BEFEO II,p. 145.

[13] Etienne Aymonier, Histoire de D'Ancien Cambodge, p. 11.

[14] G. Coedes, Journal of the Greater India Society, Calcutta, 1937, pp. 117 ff.

[15] B. R. Chatterji, op. cit. p. 37.

[16] L. Finot, BEFEO XV, pp. 70 ff.

[17] G. Coedes, Histoire Ancienne Des Etats Hindouises D'Extreme-Orient, Hanoi, 1944, pp. 139-141.

[18] A. Barth et A. Bergaigne, Inscriptions Sanskrites du Champa et du Cambodge, p. 77.

[19] Chatterji, op. cit. p. 169.

[20] Ibid. p. 175.

[21] BEFEO XII, No. 2.

[22] IHQ., 1925, p. 617.

[23] Chatterji, op. cit. p. 105.

[24] Ibid, p. 281.

[25] Ibid, p. 115.

[26] Ibid, p. 123.

[27] Angkor, London, 1958, p. 78.

[28] R. C. Majumdar, Kambujadesa, Madras, 1944, p. 146.

[29] B. R. Chatterji, op. cit. p. 244.

[30] Ancient Indian Colonization in South-East Asia, Baroda, 1963, p. 80.

[31] G. B. Walker, Angkor Empire, Calcutta, 1955, p. 40.

Civilisation and Culture in the Mekong Valley

Civilisation is an order of human relations, which has sprung up from the basic needs of man, for food, shelter, minimum government, and communication with one's fellowmen and with oneself at the highest level of consciousness.

The heightening of civilisation, in terms of consciousness, by the extension and intension of awareness, through the creative arts, makes for culture, which is the deepest need of man, as he only grows into his potential by cultivating himself.

That the Khmer peoples of Cambodia were able to evolve a civilisation in the delta of the Mekong river, as early as the first century A D , is not a miracle, because, quite a few eastern civilisations had already flourished on the landmass stretching from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea, the Mediterranean and beyond. The miracle is that they evolved one of the grandest and subtlest cultures of the world by clearing the jungles of South East Asia.

The first spark of enlightenment in the Mekong Valley seems, according to legend, to have come, when the Brahmin Kaundinya sailed from the Southern coast of Bharat, arrived, in the first century A D , in a small port in the Gulf of Siam, and married Soma, or 'Queen Willow Leaf', the daughter of the King of Snakes, thus founding the 'Lunar dynasty' of this Peninsula.

The so-called Naga peoples of Mekong Valley were naked and unashamed, but already knew agriculture, specially rice cultivation by primitive type-irrigation.

Between 240 A.D. and 245 A.D. an heir of Kaundinya named Fan-Chan sent an embassy to India. The team travelled up the Ganges to the capital of 'the Murunda Prince'. After four year's absence, the mission came back with a present of four Indo-Scythian horses. Also, perhaps they brought news of the Hindu and Buddhist faiths then fighting for dominance in India.

In the third century A.D., Funan conquered almost the whole of Malay peninsula.

After this there is historical evidence until the fourth century A.D. But then another Hindu Brahmin, also called Kaundinya, came to Funan from P'an-P'an in the peninsula and was accepted as King. He transformed the local customs by introducing the Hindu faith and its forms.

A Chinese account written a little later says: 'They worship the spirit of heaven. They make images of bronze. The two-faced ones have four arms and the four-faced ones have eight arms. Each hand holds something, a child, a bird, or a beast, or the sun or the moon. When the king sits, he raises the right knee but lets the left knee fall.' Obviously Brahminism had penetrated Funan.

At the end of the fifth century, a king called Kaundinya Jayavarman was ruling here. In 484 A.D. he sent a Brahman called Nagasena to the Emperor of China. This ambassador reported to the Chinese court: that 'the customs of his country was to render service to the god Mahesvara (Shiva), but that the Bodhisattava practised his mercy also.' Indeed the reforming influence of Buddhism extended to ten regions.

But it was the organisation, during the centuries, of the means of production in the Mekong Valley, which could produce surplus harvests that ultimately led to the flowering of intense cultures in the jungles of Cambodia.

And, as the early efforts to secure food proceeded, we find men becoming aware of the divine light in them. And, they grope around for symbols to fix their illuminations. So they raise the structures in which the gods are enshrined. Soon all the skills of the then known worlds are harnessed to construct the myth of the cosmos, through which the smallest small peoples can become integrated into the vast universe around them.

One of the first patterns of architecture, evolved ostensibly under the Indian influences brought by the second Kaundinya, and later travellers from Bharatvarsha, was in the Bussak delta, in the lower Mekong Valley, around a legendary capital called Oc-eo. In a rectangle of 3000 meters × 1500 meters, were piled up five earthworks, separated by moats. And a shrine was built here in the perishable material of wood and thatch, which might have been a prototype of the later buildings.

In the early seventh century in a place called Sambor Prei Kuk, under the Chen la Empire, were built brick structures in vast square enclosures, covered by high roofs, with jutting arches and super storeys of smaller size which reappear in the later Khmer structures.

The eighth century was the period of breakdowns. The Chen-la Empire disintegrated into two kingdoms. The Javanese invaded the Mekong delta and, henceforth, Indonesia was to contribute important strains into the local cultures.

In the ninth century, however, the Khmer civilisation began to be rebuilt, away from the old capital of Oc-eo, in the southern delta, to the north and east of the great lake in the middle of Cambodia. It seems that at Rong Chen, in the Kulens area, a temple was built merging Hindu and Buddhist architectural motifs, which had come into Java and been probably brought from Indonesia here. The Buddhist stupa style in the artificial mound of the Guptas the Hindu temples of Mahabalipuram, as they had been fused in Indonesia in Pramb Nam and Drang and Borobudur seem to have influenced the Khmers. The concept of a temple mountain, approximating to the legendary Mount Meru, seems to have become a model. The stupa was shaped into vertical superimposed storeys, on top of a square shrine.

In the ninth century the Khmer King, Jayavarman II, transferred his capital to the Angkor area. As he had spent his youth in the court of the Shailendra Kings of Java, he brought the ideas of the then great Empire of Indonesia into his own ancient landscape. The temple of Ak Yum, north west of Angkor, was patronised by him.

Under King Indravarman (877-889 A.D.), the Khmer technique matured, though the foundation of Rolous in the south-east quarter of Angkor. King Indravarman, thought of storing the monsoon water, so that it could be used during the eight months when there was no rain. He had built big artificial lakes, which became reservoirs for the irrigation system of the region. Of these the Lolei reservoir at Rolous, south-east of Angkor, was 3000 meters long and 800 meters wide. The *Baray*, or storage, was at a higher level than the plains through the construction of dykes. Trenches were dug in the dykes to take the water to the rice fields. The six million cubic meter reservoir was filled by a canal and the monsoon rains. This vast hydraulic system became the basis for the surplus wealth of the Khmer peoples.

In about 900 A.D., King Javavarman, built a bigger reservoir called the great Eastern *Baray*, which measured 7000 meters × 1800 meters. The western *Baray* built in 1050 A.D., measured 8000 meters × 2000 meters. This wonderful system of irrigation made the landscape into one of the finest rice bowls of the world

The technological development had been precisely thought out. The people could grow one hundred and fifty thousand metric tons of rice per year from 1.000 sq. kilometers of land. The produce could feed the whole population and still leave a surplus of forty percent for export to deficit areas.

The towns were planned in the Angkor region within the hydraulic system. They were embellished with temples, where the people could pray to the gods, who had made the abundance possible.

Thus, for instance, in the portion of later Angkor, in the city of Hari-Haralava, King Indravarman built the temple mountain of Bakong, in 881 A.D. This temple consists of five rising tiers of sandstone square terraces, 67 × 65 meters at the base, making a pedestal of 15 meters high for the main shrine. There were twelve chapels on the fourth terrace and eight big towers, to witness the glory of the pyramid. A moat 1500 meters round and 60 meters wide, surrounded the monument. The dwelling houses of the town formed a quadrilateral 800 meters long, with thatched cottages on piles which housed about 8000 people. The village town was divided into four parts by four axial avenues, which crossed the moats, on earthern causeways that led to the house of the gods.

In this organic city state, one can imagine the dharma of the ancient Indian conception come alive in a manner not often achieved in the land where Ram Rajya ideal of perfect kingdom had been first elaborated. In India, there were too many kingdoms, vying with each other, and most of these were under the threat of attack. The public works were neglected by the king and the people starved for long periods, when the rains did not come.

In Cambodia, however, the early medieval kings were able to knit the population together, gave them enough to eat, organised them into a primitivist cooperative system, on the basis of the original Panchayat, and provided the ancient myths from the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* as the basis of a moral order, headed by the king-God.

As the system of lake-digging continued century after century, the prosperity of the region was assured. And vast monuments were constructed from pooled labour, in between the harvests.

It is not known whether any guilds of artisans, or individual craftsmen were brought from greater India. It is quite possible that between the sixth and the thirteenth centuries A.D., when the great complexes of Mahabalipuram, Ellora, Elephanta, Khajuraho and Konarak were being constructed, the rumours of the giant carvings of other Mount Merus were travelling to all parts of South-East Asia. But it is probable that the indigenous peoples, who had absorbed the ethos of Hinduism, as also of its rival teaching, Buddhism, rendered into their own lives, the mystic symbolism of the religious of the mother country, qualified by such magical beliefs as they themselves had inherited from pre historic times.

It is quite certain, however, that the Khmer peoples inherited the Hindu epics entire. Also, they believed in the cosmos as harmony, created by the great god Brahma, in multiple forms, each one of which seeks union with the Supreme principle.

As a matter of fact, the creative energy, which had transformed the landscape of Cambodia, was itself conceived as a religio-magical power, within the total vision of the cosmos. The royal capital at the centre state was the hub of the universe, in which the King God was the pinnacle, representing the gods of Mount Meru of the Himalayas. The square plan of the temple, with its geometrical divisions, phased on the mystic mandala, opened, through its four avenues, towards the surrounding universe, so that consciousness of the inmates could be extended to all parts of the world. And, in order to make the whole mystic order realisable, the gods, demons and humans, were carved out, in intricate bas reliefs, through the imaginative skill of gifted craftsmen, so that the truth of their being could become the absolute beauty, within the greater harmony of the temple complexes.

Within the mandala of the Hindu conception, the basic house on which the edifices of stone were raised, were the ancient wooden structures of village houses. We see everywhere the moulded window, balustrades of the peasant hut, rendered in stone. The cross gabled roofs are there, copying the carpenter's technique in stone. The traditional gangways are imitated in the colonnades of the raised walks.

Thus the native genius of the Khmer peoples penetrates the constructions, elaborates fantasies of the most intricate character, proliferates into incredible diversities and renders possible greater monuments than those Indian models of which rumours had been heard from pilgrims, travellers and sailors to and from the mainland.

The great marvels of sculpture, the bas reliefs, with their decorative floral bands and the lovely Apsaras, the vast narratives of epic legend and myth which emerge to view everywhere one looks, are witness to the deep faith in harmony, arising from plenty, as also to the freedom of imagination, which came from freedom from want—and the noble visions of a cosmos in which every human impulse becomes a divine inspiration.

Cambodian creative activity can be surveyed under three major periods, namely,

I. Funan period, first to sixth century A.D.
II. Chen-la period, seventh century to the first half of the ninth century A.D.
III. Angkor period, second half of ninth century to thirteenth century A.D.

T.N.

FUNAN PERIOD
(First to sixth century A.D.)

Vestiges of the earliest temples as at Prasat Preah, show that they were of simple design, on square or rectangular brick foundation, with plain walls and pyramidal roofs. Examples of stone sculpture of this period are the linga with a face (mukhalinga) and the figures of Harihara and Vishnu, both with cylindrical head-dresses as in the Pallava figures of South India.

T.N.

CHEN-LA PERIOD

1. SAMBOR: (Seventh century A D)
2. PREI-KHMENG: (First half of eighth century A.D.)
3. KOMPONG PREAH: (Second half of eighth century A.D.)
4. KULEN: (First half of ninth century A.D.)

Whereas in the Funan period the temples were mostly of timber, the temples of the Chen-la period were of brick and stone. Stone was used for lintels, sills, colonettes and false doors. The plan of the shrine continued to be square or rectangular. It was surrounded by a tower of a few storeys. The stone images of this period were similar to those of the previous period.

Early Features

From the simple, small, solitary, single-cell fanes of early Chen-la days it is indeed a far cry to the grand masterpieces of Angkor Vat and Bayon. Architecture and sculpture developed simultaneously in Cambodia. Even in the rudimentary stages, we notice some attractive features. The surface of the stone on the sides and above the entrance of a shrine, were invariably beautified by divine and human figures and floral and geometric designs. On either side of the entrance, there were false doors, sculptured with all the ornamentation of a real door.

The level of the shrine was at first only a little above the ground. Gradually the level was raised far above the ground. More than one shrine began to be constructed in a row. They were all of the same heights. Later, platforms of different heights were built on a site and the towers of the shrines erected on the platforms. In course of time, spacious and long corridors around the temple were designed. A few damaged sculptures have been found at Sambor Prei Kuk. They were so perfect in workmanship that the sculptor's art must have had a long history in Cambodia. Thanks to the architectural interest of Jayavarman II, the expansion of temple buildings began at Kulen. There three shrines were built in a row and were surrounded by an enclosure with entrance towers. The lintels, colonettes and frontons bore ornamental designs. The human figures had a square face, almond-shaped eyes, and straight rigid eyebrows.

SAMBOR

Lingam

One of the miracles of transformation is the symbol from Bharat, in the earliest known site of ancient Cambodian Hindu culture, Sambor (Pre-Khming or Kompong Preah). This is the polished lingam, now in the Phnom Penh Museum.

The possible time during which it may have been carved could be between the seventh-eighth centuries.

We have no exact evidence of how the Siva cult travelled to Cambodia. But it is quite clear that, during the sixth-seventh centuries A.D. Saivism was prevalent in Khmer lands, even at the time when Harsha of Kanauj gave impetus to the teachings of Buddha by holding the great council on which Huan Tsang the Chinese traveller to India presided.

Infact, mixed with the magical cults of the local peoples, the Saivites were spreading, through the alliance with the energies being released for the conquest of forest, by the invocation of the jungle God, Siva.

It is equally uncertain how the early strains of Indian influence had percolated from the mainland of India.

Dr. Quaritch Wales has tried in his book *Towards Angkor,* to trace the route by which influences travelled to ancient Champa, as Cambodia was called at that time. On an Island in the harbour of the river Takuapa, this scholar found, apart from some early Chinese sherds and Persian pottery, embedded in the trunks of trees, three Brahminical statues of genuine Indian craftsmanship, made in a local schist. There were also found, near the images, schist slabs, one of which had an inscription in eighth century Tamil. On the basis of this evidence Dr. Wales has suggested that the statues found on the Takuapa river are Pallave in style. He attributes them to the seventh or eighth century A.D.

In view of this, the lingam of the Chen-la period, which we reproduce here, may have derived its style from the southern Indian Peninsula.

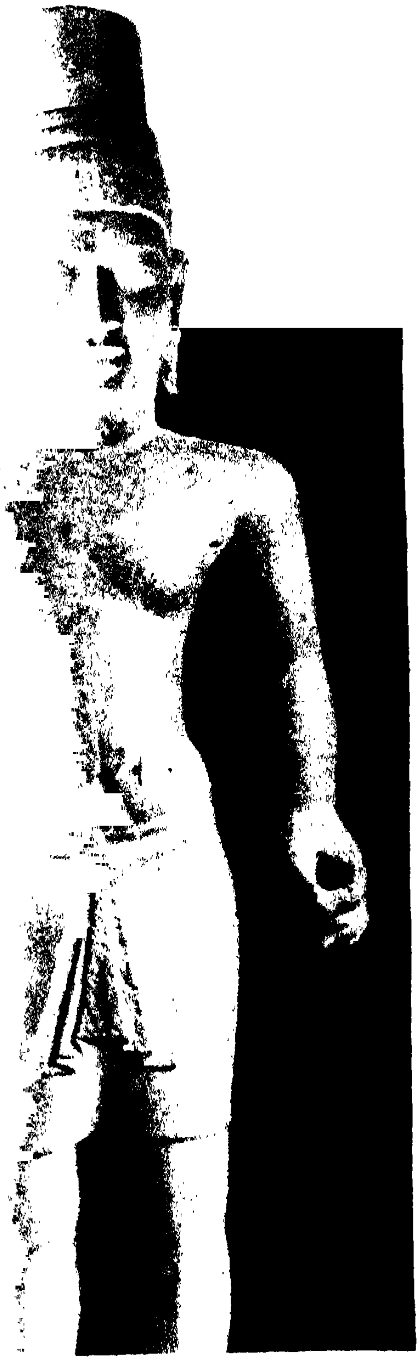
The carving is superb. The static square has been energised by the broad triangular incisions on the four sides, to contrast with the coherence of the beautifully rounded top. The peculiar feature of the localised Siva bust, with a vertical crown, introduces a finely carved figure, which shows that such lingams had been adopted a long time ago in indigenous worship.

The original motif may have come from India, but we already have here an exquisitely carved symbol in an authentic Cambodian style.

Figure of Shiva

The Cambodian carving of the figure of Shiva is equally interesting in the use of the local figure of a small sized man as a model for exaltation to the great God. The wide mouth, with thick lips, the high cheek bones and the fine dilated nostrils of the sensitive Champa face, are given the long ears, with lobes, of the Indian iconography. The high head-dress is ostensibly the crown of the local king. The beautiful bare body is chiselled and polished with a deft hand, with ingenious finish of the folds of the dhoti, from the waist downwards.

Obviously, there were craftsmen with nimble fingers, and high creative faculties already available in early medieval Cambodia.



1,2 The two highly finished sculptures, A Lingam and a Khmer statue of Shiva. Phnom Penh Museum.

BEGINNINGS OF CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE

5. PREAH KOH: (Second half of the ninth century)
6. BAKONG: (Second half of the ninth century)

We enter the Angkor period in the next style of Preah Koh and Bakong.

The central pyramid of Bakong (a stepped pyramid of five terraces) marks the commencement of the classical architecture of Cambodia. They are three concentric walled courtyards reached through entrance towers (gopuras).

It was again at Bakong that the favourite reptile of the Cambodian masters, the giant cobra, with its huge out spread hood, made its first appearance, in a rather crude form with seven heads. Later it developed into a magnificent eleven headed creature, whose long body served as balustrade, held in position by scores of giants on either side of the wide avenues of Angkor Thom.

Preah Koh

The nightmarish spectacle of the tropical terror among the monuments of Cambodia has few parallel in the world.

The name of the group of temples (Preah Koh or Sacred Ox) refers to the divine bull Nandi, the vahan of Siva. In fact, it is here that the earliest form of Nandi is seen in Cambodian monuments.

There are here two rows of three shrines. One row is dedicated to Siva and the other to his consort Uma.

These shrines stand on a rectangular terrace. Around this terrace are four enclosing walls with entrance towers.

Beyond the outer enclosure is a moat.

The stairway leading to the shrines is flanked by figures of lions and elephants.

We see for the first time at Bakong the practice of setting apart a separate building to serve as a library.

Dancers, makaras, and Garuda also appear among the ornamental bas reliefs here.

Thus, in the second half of the ninth century, in the temples of Preah Koh, the evolution of the temple style absorbs the Pallava shore temple format. But the pyramid is piled higher and the shrines are spaced on a plinth.

The Dvarpalas guarding the entrances are heavy creatures. The walls of the shrines are solidly built from laterite blocks. The window traceries are made from small mullions. The window frames are cut out from stone. Relief carving appears in the images of Dvarpalas carved in the sandstone slabs, fitted into the brickwall facing. The whole elaboration is primitivist and fundamental, except for the decoration on top of the doorways and the rounded chiselling of the pillars supporting the facade.

Bakong

Bakong, in the Rolous area, carried the tradition of Preah Koh beyond the small shrine, to the piled up terraces, with the imaginary Mount Meru shrine on the top.

The block of stones are much bigger. Perhaps the increasing harvests afforded more patronage. The ambitions of the builders were always verging on to the grandeur later to be realised in Angkor.

The Bakong shrines still seem to be Saivite.

As a matter of fact, the surviving monumental sculptures of Siva, and his consorts at Bakong, evidenced to the arden worship of this god.

The combination of sculpture and architecture, in the same construction, is now carried further, in the detailed treatment of the doorways and pyramids, except for the free standing images of Siva and his consorts, as well the lions near the doorways. The later are reminiscent of the South Indian originals in the communication of the energy of the royal beast, without versimilitude.

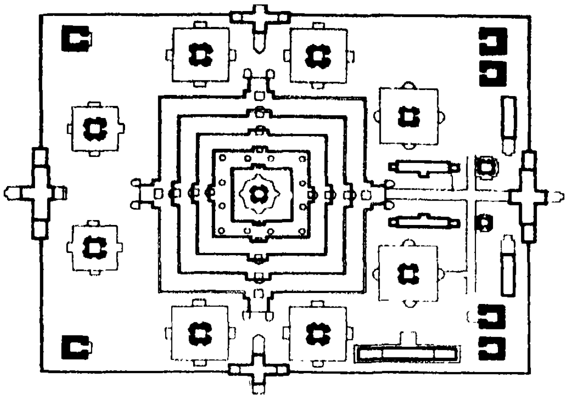
7. PHNOM BAKHENG: (end of the ninth and beginning of the tenth century A.D.)

The cult of the king-god by now demanded greate grandeur. The high top of Mount Meru was the centre o the world. Yasovarman I, (889 A.D.), found a two hundred feet high hill by the Siemreap river, which could be fancied as the holy Ganga. On this mount was conceived the centra temple of Devraj, (King God) with the symbol of Siva linga enshrined in it. Around it came to be the royal capital with some shrines dispersed on the nearby hillocks. This was the beginning of efforts at classical perfection.

Phnom Bakheng is the important survivor from this period, reminiscent of the isolated monolithic rathas o Mahabalipuram.

On five terraces, with sixty-four turrets on the corners and staircases, leading from four points, arose, on the highes terrace, a temple with five stone towers, built on a square on the rectangular roof of the shrine. Fragments of the high central tower have survived. The majesty of the plan shows the effort towards a classical order. The sculpture of the standing lion images, flanking the steps of the temple, show stylisation. The interiors of the shrines are simpler than those in the preceding style of the Rolous.

Altogether we feel that we have entered here the Angkor phase, not only because this temple is nearer the bigger



3 An elaborate doorway. Preah Koh.
4 A ruined temple. Preah Koh.
5 Lateral brick-built shrines surrounding the central stone pyramid of the temple. Bakong.
6 Bas relief. Bakong.

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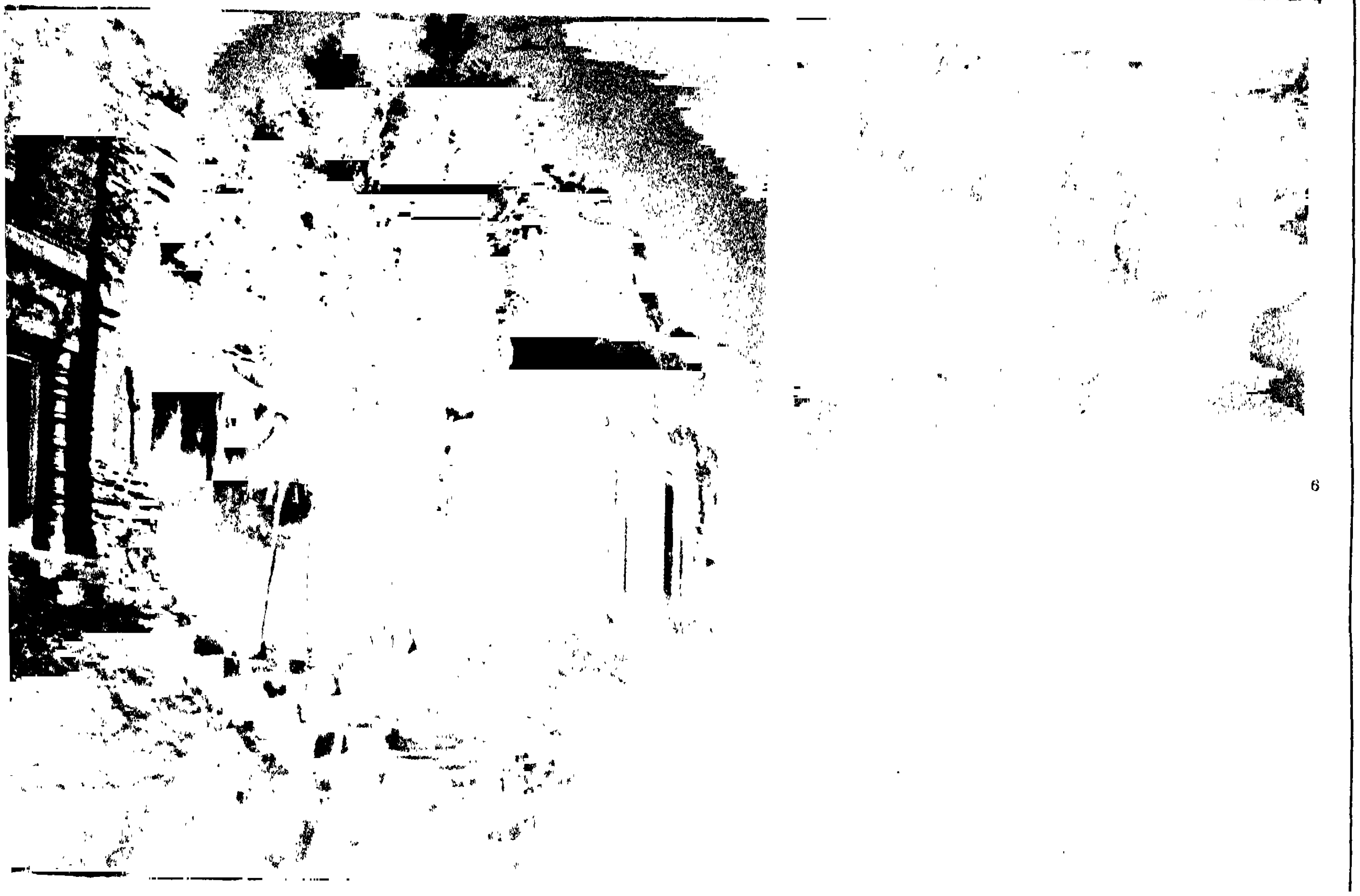

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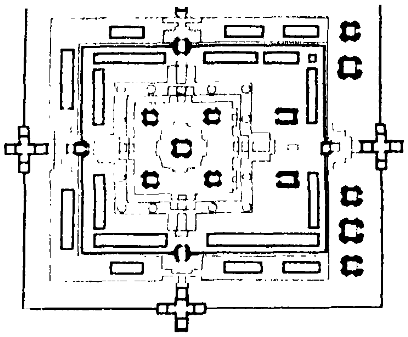

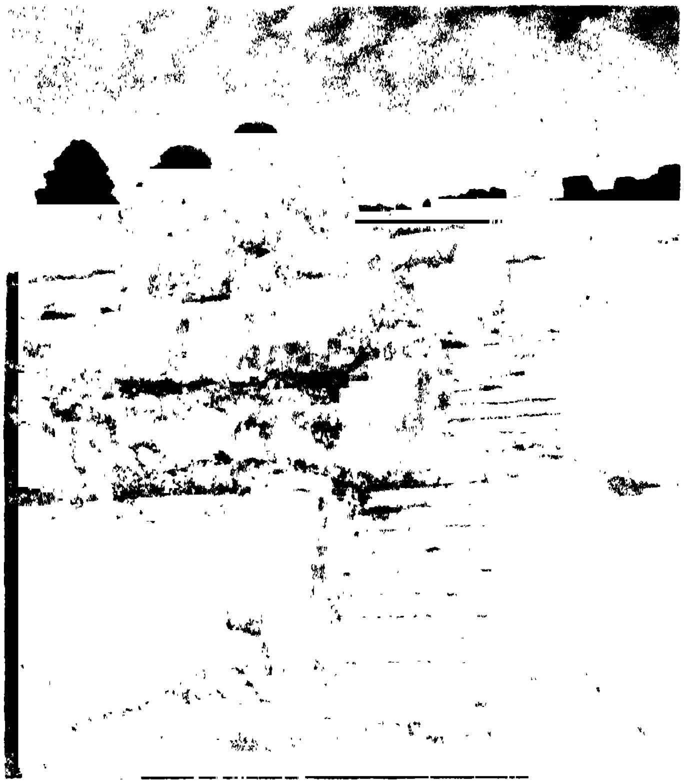

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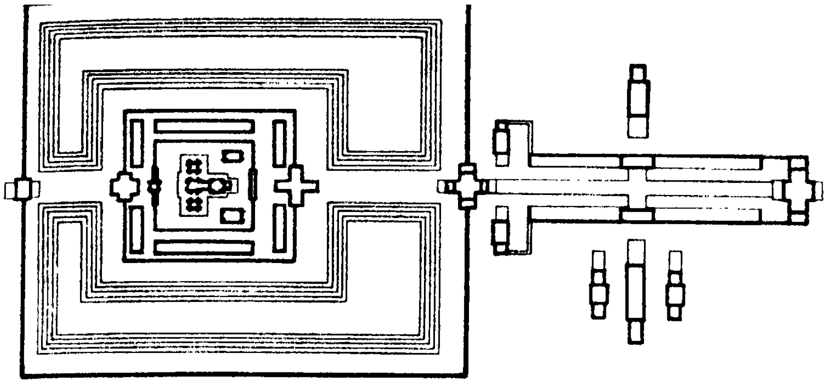

7 *General view of the staircase and terraces. Phnom Bakheng.*

8 *General view of the front facade of the temple. Pre Rup.*

9 *Bas-relief showing Vishnu in the interior of the temple. Prasat Kravan.*

10 *An elephant in sandstone. East Mebon.*

11 *Intricately carved relief of the north library, presenting a scene from the Bhagwad Purana, the slaying of King Kansa by Krishna. Banteay Srei.*

12 Pagoda designed outer gateway. Banteay Srei.
13 Interior group of temple buildings with the courtyard. Banteay Srei.
14 Detail of Krishna slaying King Kansa's head. Banteay Srei.

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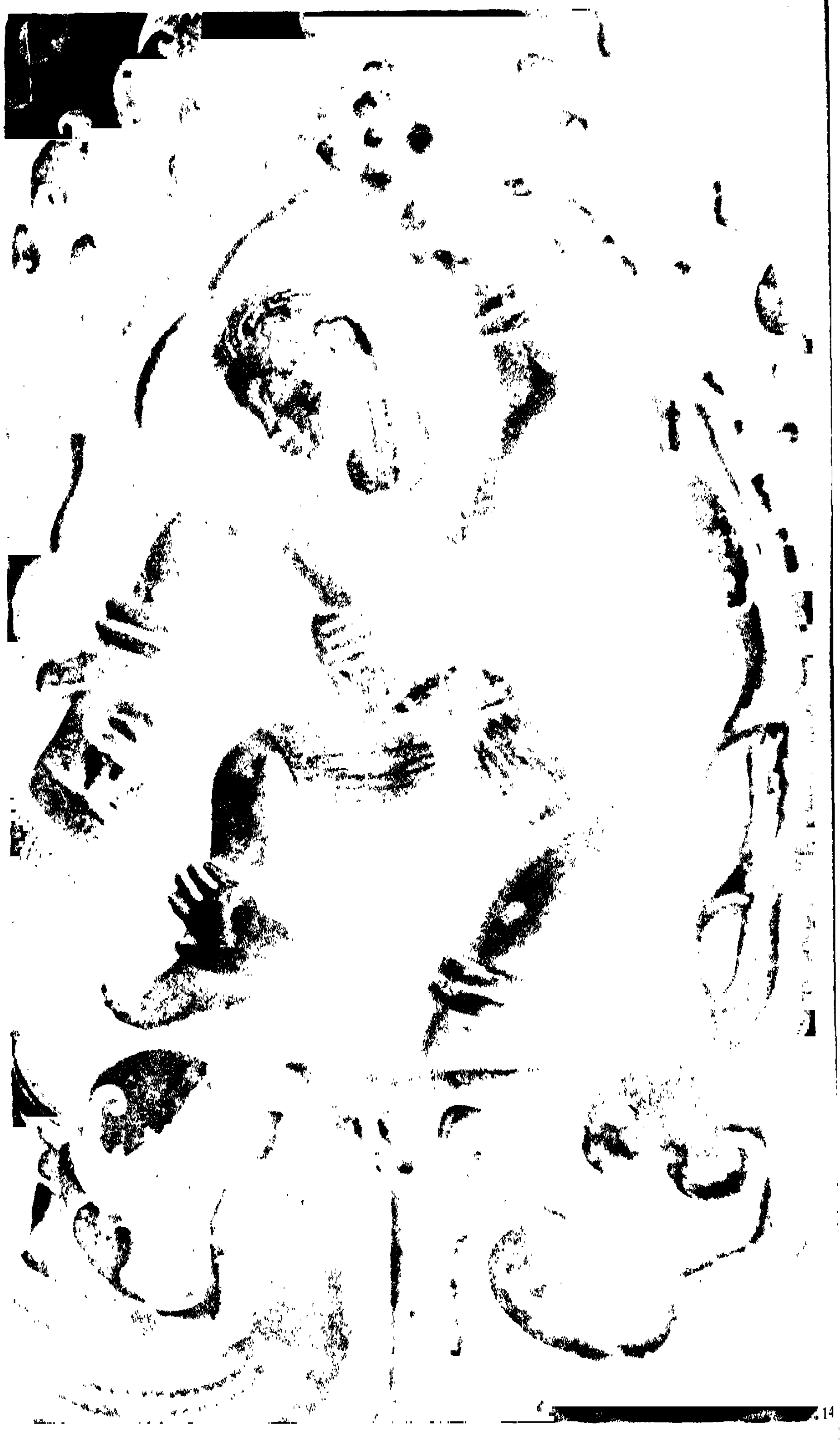
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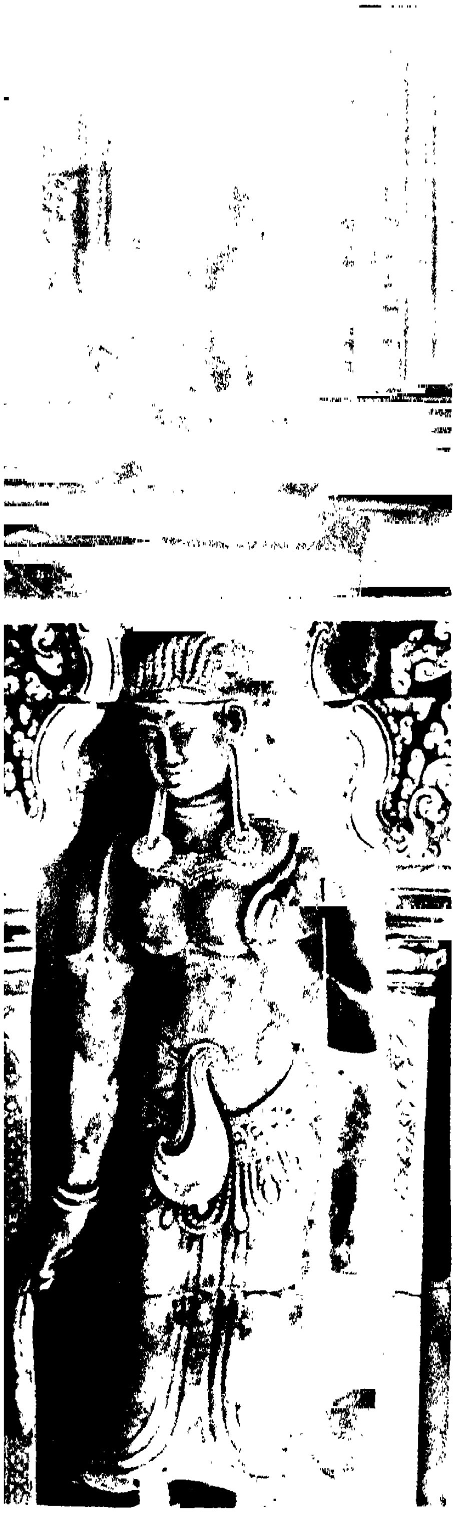
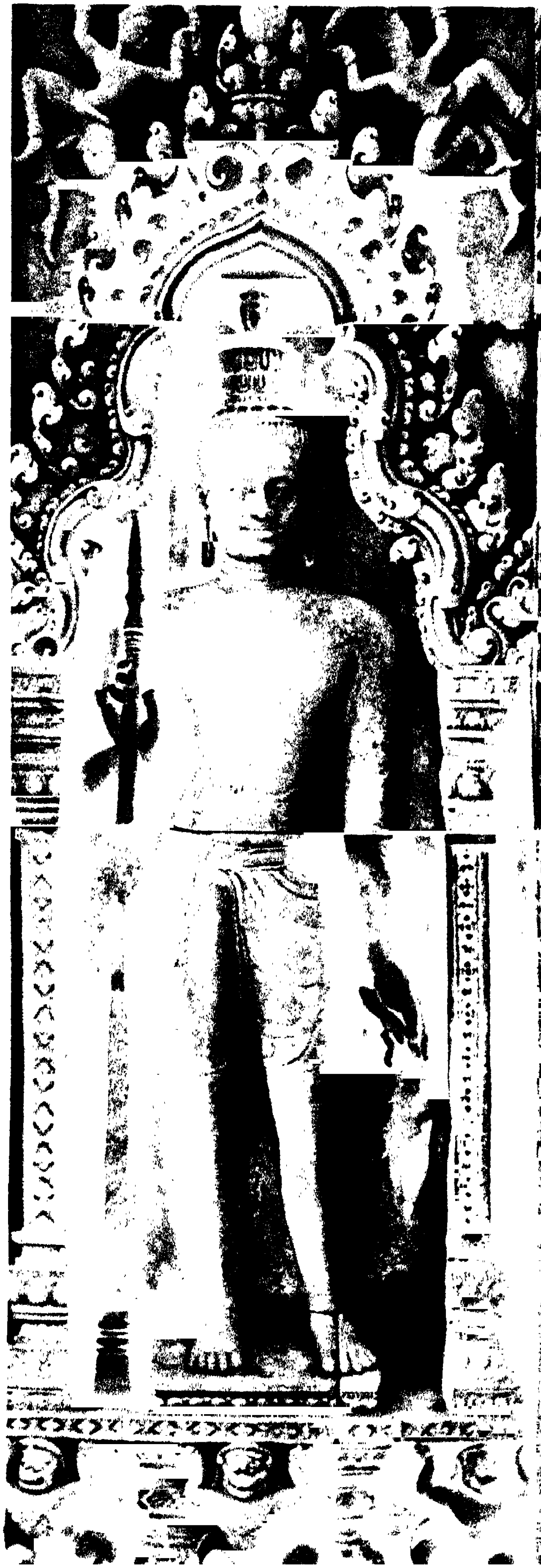
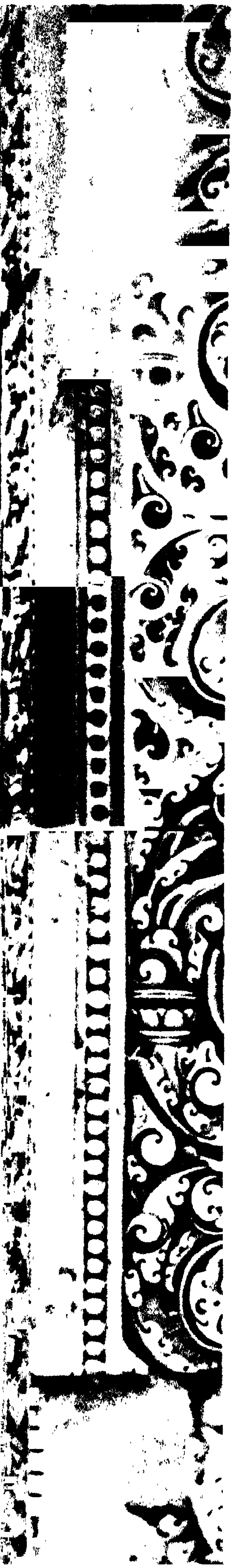
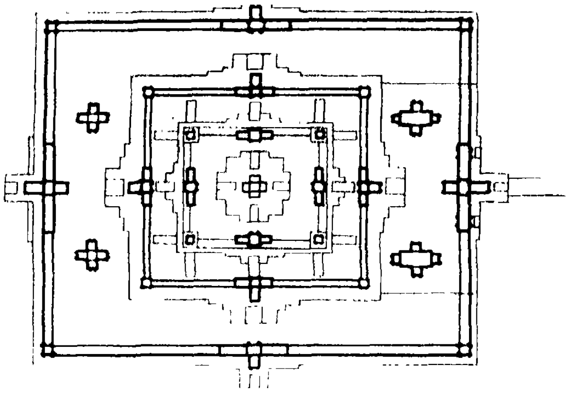




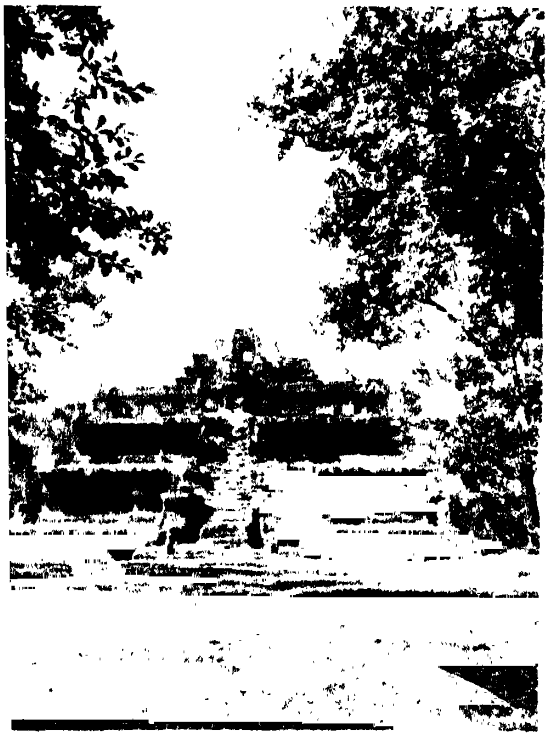


Monkey God, Hanuman in front of the entrance guarding the shrine. Banteay Srei.

Relief of a female deity in pink sandstone, with rich ornamental decorations on the walls of the shrine. Banteay Srei.
Relief of a sleek figure of Bodhisattava. Banteay Srei.



18 View of the temple pyramid. Phimeanakas.
19 General View. Takeo.
20 Bas relief on the walls of the entrance pavilion depicting the scenes from the battle of Lanka. Baphuon.



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complexes to come, but because it is the first experiment in the Angkor style.

In the same Bakheng style was achieved the complex of the temple of Prasat Kravan from 1121 A.D. downwards.

At Prasat Kravan we find a row of giant towers and bas reliefs on walls, all in brick. The appearance of stone was imparted to the reliefs by plaster coating.

The major reorientation is the emergence of Vishnu as Supreme God, carved on the brick walls.

The mobility of the panel, with Vishnu riding on the shoulders of the bird Garuda, shows the dexterity of the sculpture in the pliable but not easily handled brick medium.

Like their original prototypes in South India, the relief sculptures in Prasat Kravan were plastered in colour.

The lovely goddesses of later times begin to appear here.

Khmer architecture owes an innovation in the Siva temple of Preah Vihear (893 A.D.) to King Yasovarman. Whereas previously temples were constructed in concentric enclosures, Preah Vihear was laid out in separate courts, linked by causeways running for about 800 meters. The main shrine was on the top of a mountain. The causeway sloping from the main shrine passes through five towered gateways (gopuras). Yasovarman was not the builder of Angkor Vat and Bayon, as presumed by early scholars. There is no authority for believing that Yasovarman was a leper and that a statue found at Angkor Thom is his configuration.

8. KOH KER: (about the middle of the tenth century A.D.)

East Mebon Pre Rup

Nothing very much survives of the capital built by Cambodian King, Jayavarman IV, in Koh Ker, about a hundred miles to the north-east of Angkor.

The ruins show that there was an extensive palace-like building, in the centre of which was the temple of Prasat Thom.

This style seems to have been carried, after a generation, back to Yasodharapur, near the Angkor complex, to East Mebon and Pre Rup.

In both these temples, there was a return to the original pentagon arrangement of shrines on top of the pyramid of the temple.

As at Prasat Kravan, there are five imposing towers on an elevated platform, at East Mebon and Pre Rup.

The East Mebon temple was built on top of a laterite

sandstone blocks. The whole structure was put in centre of a rectangular water basin.

To the south of the east Mebon, on the banks of the water pool, are the remains of the Pre Rup temple. For the last time, the Meru mountain on top of the terrace pyramid was built here. Also, the main temple was constructed in bricks for the last time in this place.

The two complexes of Koh Ker, and of East Mebon—Pre Rup, are in transition towards finer finish and careful detailed carvings, which were to be seen in the next monument of the second half of the tenth century, Banteay Srei.

9. BANTEAY SREI: (Second half of the tenth century A.D.)

About the end of the tenth century, a lovely miniature cosmos was built in Banteay Srei, meaning citadel, about twenty kilometers north of Angkor. The metaphor of the 'Jewel of Cambodia' has been aptly used in describing the structures in a clearing of the forest.

It was built by Yajnavaraha, the preceptor of Jayavarman V. The guru's sister, Jahnavi, as well as the famous couple, Indralakshmi (sister of Jayavarman V) and Divakara Bhatta, the Brahman who hailed from the banks of Yamuna in Jambudvipa or India, donated many foundations to the temple.

The Banteay Srei shrines were built on a flat landscape. The Mount Meru motif disappeared. All the shrines were constructed on low stone pedestals. The enchantments of the buildings, in this complex, comes, apart from the exquisitely detailed and finished carvings, from the pinkish sandstone used, with the minimum brickwork and plaster decoration. Timber beams were used to bridge the spans, but were concealed behind stones. But the chiselling of the facades, with minute care, shows that there was a tradition of wood carving in Cambodia as in India, before the stone reliefs began to be executed.

A pleasing feature of Cambodian art which is not common in India is the beautification of the triangular frontons (pediments) by bas reliefs. Banteay Srei contains a profusion of such bas reliefs of unsurpassed excellence. They depict episodes from Hindu lore, particularly from Krishna's life, dear to the heart of Divakara Bhatta. The panels of intricate pattern, floral and geometric, have been so delicately carved that they look like filligree work or lace drawn over the stone. One thousand years of exposure to sun and rain have not obliterated the freshness and sharpness of the bas reliefs.

The emphasis on decorative floral detail on top of the doorways does not mean that Banteay Srei craftsmen had forgotten the earlier fundamentalism. In the Narsimha man-lion Dvarapals in the courtyard, we see the survival of free standing sculptures of the earlier centuries, only smoothened by the chisel, as if carved from wood and not these shrines are a new feature. And in these spaces appear the scenes from myth and legend, enclosed within the Cambodian wooden palace panel.

One of the finest reliefs on the pediments of the north library shows Krishna slaying Kansa in a vigorous relief.

Another feature of the delicate and sensitive style of chiselling of Banteay Srei is the series of lovely girls, the Apsaras in the niches, with their moon breasted and transparent skirts and intricate coiffeurs. The birds, the flowers, the stylised makaras and elephants, are all conceived by fluid imaginations, capable of lifting everything to the beauties of paradise.

10. KLEANG: (end of tenth century and first half of eleventh century A.D.)

Coinciding with the spell of Banteay Srei, towards the end of the tenth century and the first part of the eleventh century were constructed two complexes, called Phimeanakas and Takeo, in what is called the style of Kleang, the forerunner of Angkor Vat.

Phimeanakas

The legend about Phimeanakas gives some clue to why it was built. According to the story : A snake princess, daughter of Nagarya, the snake-king, who owned the land, appeared to the king in the gold tower of the Royal Palace. The king fell in love with her and spent the evening with her before visiting his other queens. The monarch believed that if he did not consort with this snake princess, disaster would come to the empire.

The view of the temple pyramid of Phimeanakas, or palace, or heaven, discloses a giant plinth with a pyramid on top.

Takeo

On the banks of the Siemreap river, not far from the Phimeanakas, stands the Takeo ruin of a pyramid shrine.

The important features of this structure are the galleries of the terraces.

The shrines are also not square, but crosses with equal arms. The temple roof and the tops of towers are gliding. The decorations are mostly on walls tympan and door sills. These constructions form a transition to the style of the Baphuon.

11. BAPHUON: (second half of the eleventh century A.D.)

In the middle of the eleventh century was conceived the ambitious mass of the Baphuon, perhaps the biggest temple of Angkor, being ten times the size of Phimeanakas, once gilded, but in utter ruin today.

Unfortunately, the hillock on which it was built, crumbled in many places and the walls and windows collapsed.

The ruins disclose the plan of a pyramidal temple of stone, built on top of five terraces, with three galleries, which were placed one above the other.

On the terraces were pavilions, through which pilgrims went to the temple. These pavilions were profusely decorated with sculptural reliefs.

Not only were the stone lintels and pediments decorated, but the whole circumference of the outside wall of the temple was carved with reliefs of Hindu myths and legends. Infact, the narrative scenes here, beyond the floral decorations, were the first experiments for what was to come afterwards in Angkor Vat—the vast *bas reliefs* of ancient mythology. Only here the reliefs are divided into picture panels and are not in continuous bands, as happened later, but in vertical columns like a film strip. The sacred themes spilled over into images of everyday life, executed in dynamic manner, showing birds and animals, processions of the hunt, war, and ascetics sleeping on nailed beds. Such scenes were later to reappear in the Bayon.

Preah Pithu,
Chausay Tevoda,
Beng Mea Lea,
Banteay Samre.

Before the building of Angkor Vat, noble and charming sanctuaries like Preah Pithu, Chausay Tevoda, Beng Mea Lea and Banteay Samre came into being. The last two monuments were, harbingers of Angkor Vat in design and decoration. Surrounding their quadrangles are long galleries, with sculptured walls on one side and open arcades on the other.

12. ANGKOR VAT: (end of the eleventh and first half of the twelfth century A.D.)

Angkor Vat is the pinnacle of achievement of the Khmer culture.

The closing years of the eleventh century and the first half of the twelfth century have been called the age of glory of Cambodia.

After half a century of internecine warfare, the coming of King Suryavarman II to the throne in 1113 A.D., began a chapter of domestic stabilisation and foreign adventures.

The conscience of the king was the royal Guru, Divakan Pandit, seemingly a man very much like Chanakya (author of the Arthashastra and Chief Minister of Chandragupta Maurya in the third century B.C. in ancient India).

Presumably, under this Brahmin's advice, King Suryavarman exalted himself from Deva-Raja, King-God, to Vishnu-Raja, Supreme God-King. Although Sivaism did not go out completely, King Suryavarman II, began the construction in Angkor Vat mainly as an exaltation of himself to the Vishnu incarnation in life and death.

Thousands of craftsmen were engaged, for nearly half a century, in the creation of this, the biggest, temple in the whole world.

The architecture of this area of the imagination finds its culmination in the classical order of design, execution and perfection.

Even now, if you fly over Cambodia, this monolithic structure, in the heart of the jungle, stands out in supreme majesty above all the other ruins of the monuments, except the later Bayon.

The outer enclosures of two sanctuaries – Banteay Chhmar and Preah Khan of Kompong Svai (the latter discovered from the air in 1937), were larger than that of Angkor Vat. But they do not contain architectural wonders as in Angkor Vat and they are now only masses of ruins. Scholars were not sure whether Angkor Vat was a temple or a tomb or a palace. 'Whatever it be,' observes Norman Lewis, 'it was built on a grand scale. It is a truly tremendous piece of work, being one of the largest sanctuaries ever executed. Within its area it could contain all the monuments of ancient Greece.'

Development of Ten Generations

Angkor Vat marks the acme of the development of a culture in all its aspects, which covered at least ten generations. The creative genius, which produced it and its location, endowed it with immortal glamour, magnificence and majesty, attained through its vastness, symmetry through the co-ordination of its parts, delicacy and refinement through meticulous traceries. Though it no longer serves the purpose for which it was erected, though it has been pillaged and deserted, it still has an ineffable charm and an indefinable grandeur among the monuments of the world.

Plan and Dimension

The plan of Angkor Vat is simple.

Next to the moat are two external enclosures, and a third inner one, in which the sanctuary is situated.

Each of these enclosures is on a raised level. The highest central tower, over the holy of holies, is surrounded by four subsidiary towers at the four corners of the central terrace. Similar towers have been built at the four corners of the walled enclosure around the central terrace and also above the entrance. But these have all been badly damaged. The dimensions of Angkor Vat are cyclopean. The moat is in reality an artificial lake (200 metres in width). The east-west side of its bank measures 1500 metres and the north-south side 1300 metres. Between the moat and the outer wall runs a path 30 metres wide. A well paved stone causeway 15 metres wide, crosses the moat and leads to the western entrance. The Naga balustrades of the causeway are supported by blocks of stone. The head of the serpent is four metres high, among the highest to Cambodia monuments. The dimensions of the first enclosure are 1000 x 815 metres, and of the second 340 x 270 metres.

Next to the second enclosure is the first terrace, around which runs the covered galley of bas reliefs. This measures on the east-west side 215 metres and on the north-south side 187 metres. Thus the approximate length of the sculptures is 800 metres or half a mile. On either side of the entrance to the first terrace is a library. The second terrace measures 100 x 115 metres. The galleries of this terrace are not full of bas reliefs like the first terrace. It is on the third terrace that the large central tower stands, surrounded by four smaller towers, all in fairly good condition. All the stairways, particularly the topmost one to the central tower, are very steep.

Rifled Sanctum

Alexander Foucher says: 'The summit of the central tower finally reaches a height of 180 ft. above the level of the first flag stone, some 80 ft. more than the present pinnacle of Borobudur. Under this tower, at the meeting point of all the avenues and staircases of the edifice, once dwelt the deity to which it was dedicated. But when the French archaeologists first arrived there, they found four idols of the Buddha, seated against the four walled-up doors of the cella, and, inside the latter, only shapeless fragments of an old statue. Yet it is quite certain that this was the image of a Hindu god and quite probably this god was Vishnu, or rather the king who founded the temple in the eleventh century, deified under the name of Paramavishnuloka.

Forerunners

The towers of Angkor Vat, whose forerunners appeared in earlier Cambodian sanctuaries, are as already stated, strikingly different from the sikharas of India in design. They have been compared to lotus buds and pineapples. The quincuncial arrangement of five towers (with four at the corners of a square and a fifth at the centre) was perfected at Angkor Vat after experiments at Phnom Bakheng, Pre Rup and Ta Keo. The gradins system (i.e., a series of a stepped terraces for the construction of different parts of a sanctuary), was followed at Bakong and Phnom Bakheng (with five gradins), at Chok Gargyar (with seven gradins) and at Phimeanakas and Pre Rup (with three gradins). At Angkor Vat we have three gradins. The arcade system (i.e., the provision of covered passages or corridors), the most attractive feature of Angkor Vat, had its earlier examples at

Phimeanakas, Ta Keo and Beng Mea Lea. It was at the last place that the spacious galleries were completely vaulted in stone and held by the walls on one side and by pillars on the other. One would be amazed to notice that the roofs of the galleries, resembling large corrugated tiles, are really exact copies thereof, in large sandstone slabs, chiselled to give the appearance of corrugated sheets. Similarly, the railings of the large windows resemble lathe-turned wooden beadings, but the entire window with the beady railings is a monolith.

A Half Mile Gallery

Imagine a single art gallery that would make one walk a mile to pass it, and you have the Angkor Vat gallery of Hindu mythology. The following is the disposition of the bas reliefs in the four corridors of Angkor Vat:

Western Corridor	South Wing	Mahabharata
	North Wing	Ramayana
Northern Corridor	West Wing	Vishnu lore
	East Wing	Krishna lore
Eastern Corridor	North Wing	Vishnu lore
	South Wing	Ocean churning and legend
Southern Corridor	East Wing	Royal Review
	West Wing	Heaven and Hell.

Starting from two feet above the ground, the bas reliefs are six feet in height. The panels have been identified and studied by savants like Coedes, Bosch and Pyzyluski. 'In these gallery reliefs,' wrote Ananda Coomaraswamy, 'are combined a superb vitality and a complete preoccupation with the heroic theme, as correlated and in separable conditions; the Angkor Vat reliefs are thus spiritually greater than those of Borobudur.'

Narrative Reliefs

In the reliefs of Angkor Vat, Vaishnava themes (of Rama and Krishna incarnations) predominate. Suryavarman and his adviser seem to have intentionally chosen the scene of the battlefield of Kurukshetra, with Krishna and Arjuna in the forefront, to be first seen by people, with two objects: conservation of their martial spirit and inculcation of faith (the latter by reminding them of the message of the Bhagavad Gita). In the Angkor Vat galleries we find eleven episodes from the Ramayana (including the pursuit of the golden deer by Rama, the duel of Vali and Sugriva and the final fire ordeal of Sita), five exploits of Krishna (including his breaking of the twin trees and the lifting of the Goverdhana hill), four scenes of Vishnu lore (including his Seshasayana form and the churning of the ocean) and three scenes of Saiva lore (including the burning of the god of love by Siva, Ravana shaking the Kailasa mountain).

Hell Scenes

Perhaps the most intriguishing of the tableaux of Angkor Vat are those in which the scenes of hell have been shown. This is the impression that M. O. Williams had in 1935: 'When it comes to hell, the Angkor stone masons make Dante and Dore seems mild. Folks who love murder stories turn their backs on Khmer tortures.' The panel begins with the court of Yama (god of death and justice)attended by his registrar, Chitragupta. As many as 32 branches of hell and 37 of heaven have been presented here. The torture of sinners has been portrayed with blood-curdling vivacity. The names of each hell is inscribed in brief labels in Khmer language. A few of the tortures are:

1. Breaking of bones (Asthibhanga) for causing damage to houses, tanks, wells and gardens.
2. Hanging from a thorny tree (kutasalmali) for giving false evidence.
3. Torturing by worms (Kriminicaya) for insulting gods, the sacred fire, teachers of piety and the learned.
4. Boiling cauldron (Kumbhipaka) for betraying the trust of the king and robbing of teachers and poor people.
5. Live coals (Raurava) for non-payment of debts.

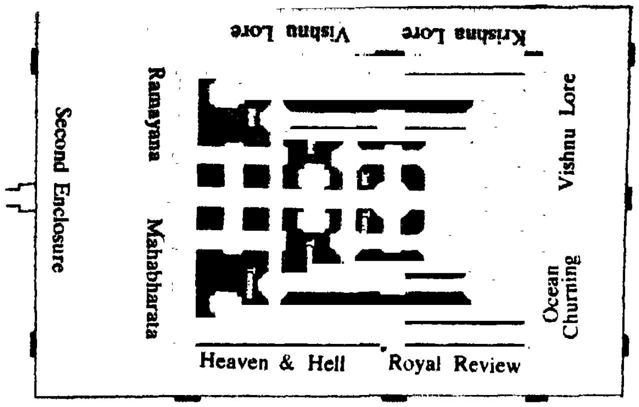
Other Scenes

Scenes of paradise are dull and lifeless, though the dwellers look like kings and queens and their attendants bring them fruits and flowers. There are several lovely panels giving glimpses of the palace and park, tableaux that we would now call documentaries. This section of the sculpture seems to have been done after the death of Suryavarman II as his posthumous deified name, Paramavishnuloka, appears in the inscribed labels.

In chariots and palanquins, ride queens and princesses wearing diadems, past what look like parks or orchards. Their female attendants carry umbrellas and broad fans. Some of them are plucking fruits from trees. In one panel we see the king's bodyguard of female lancers and archers (as in ancient India) and a group of long-haired priests. Two of the priests are bringing fruits to their king. The inscription gives the caption: 'Offer of presents to the king by the learned.'

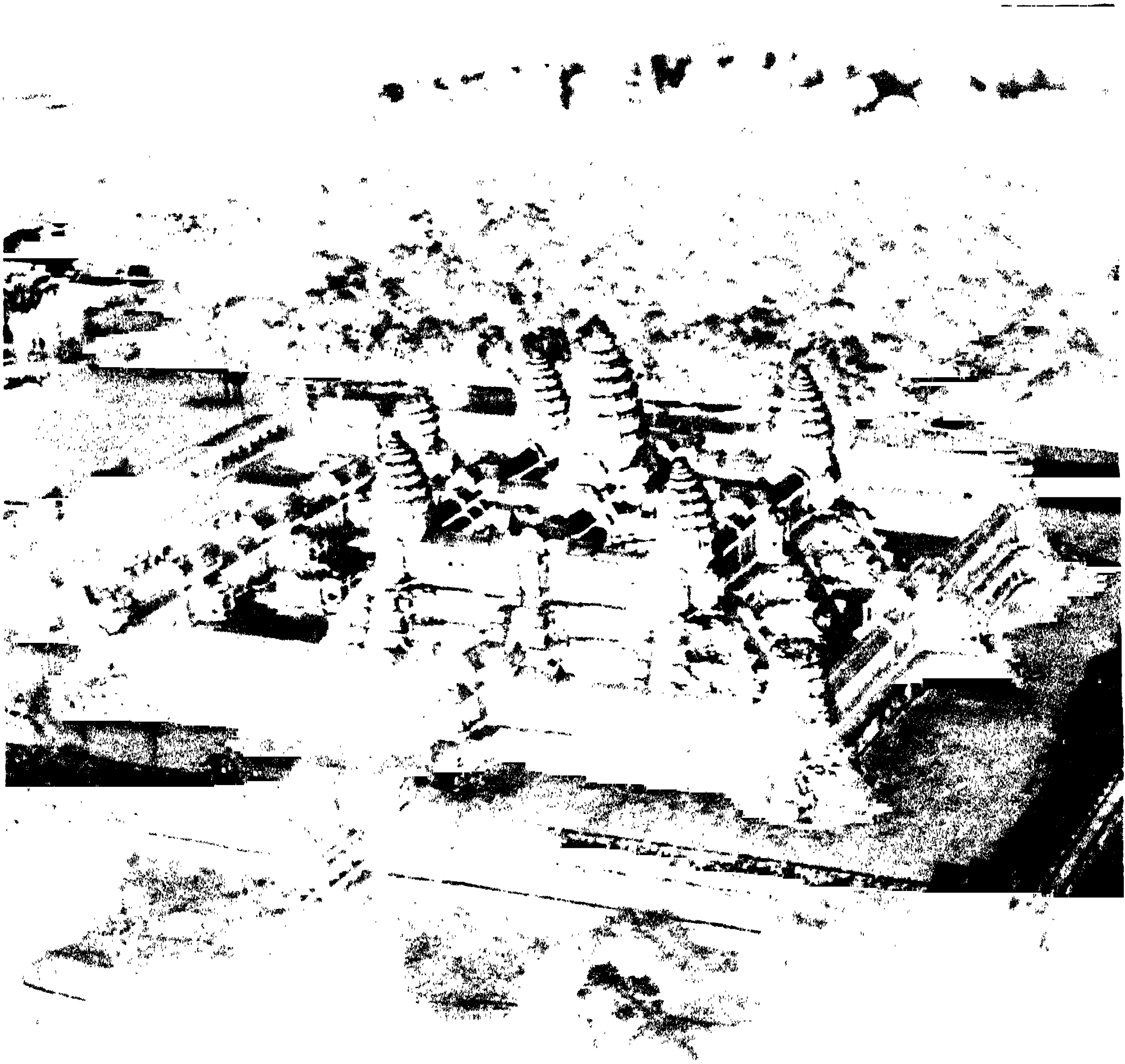
Court Scenes

We can have an idea from the sculptures of the personal appearance of the king. A jewelled crown on his head, heavy earrings, an ornate necklace, a bracelet on each arm and wrist, an ornamental belt from which a dagger dangled these made up the regal outfit. While he sat gracefully and majestically on the throne, as many as fourteen umbrellas, four flywhisks and five large fans honour his presence. Cambodian kings do not seem to have been behind their Indian confreres in pomp. With the king could be seen the members of his four man cabinet. Below the figures, their designations have been inscribed. With the ministers are also seen helmeted and armed chiefs of the Khmer army. An imposing state procession is the subject of another engaging series. An


Krishna Lore
Vishnu Lore
Ramayana
Second Enclosure
Mahabharata
Vishnu Lore
Ocean Churning
Heaven & Hell
Royal Review

ANGKOR VAT

21 An aerial view of the general group of temple buildings from the south east. Angkor Vat,



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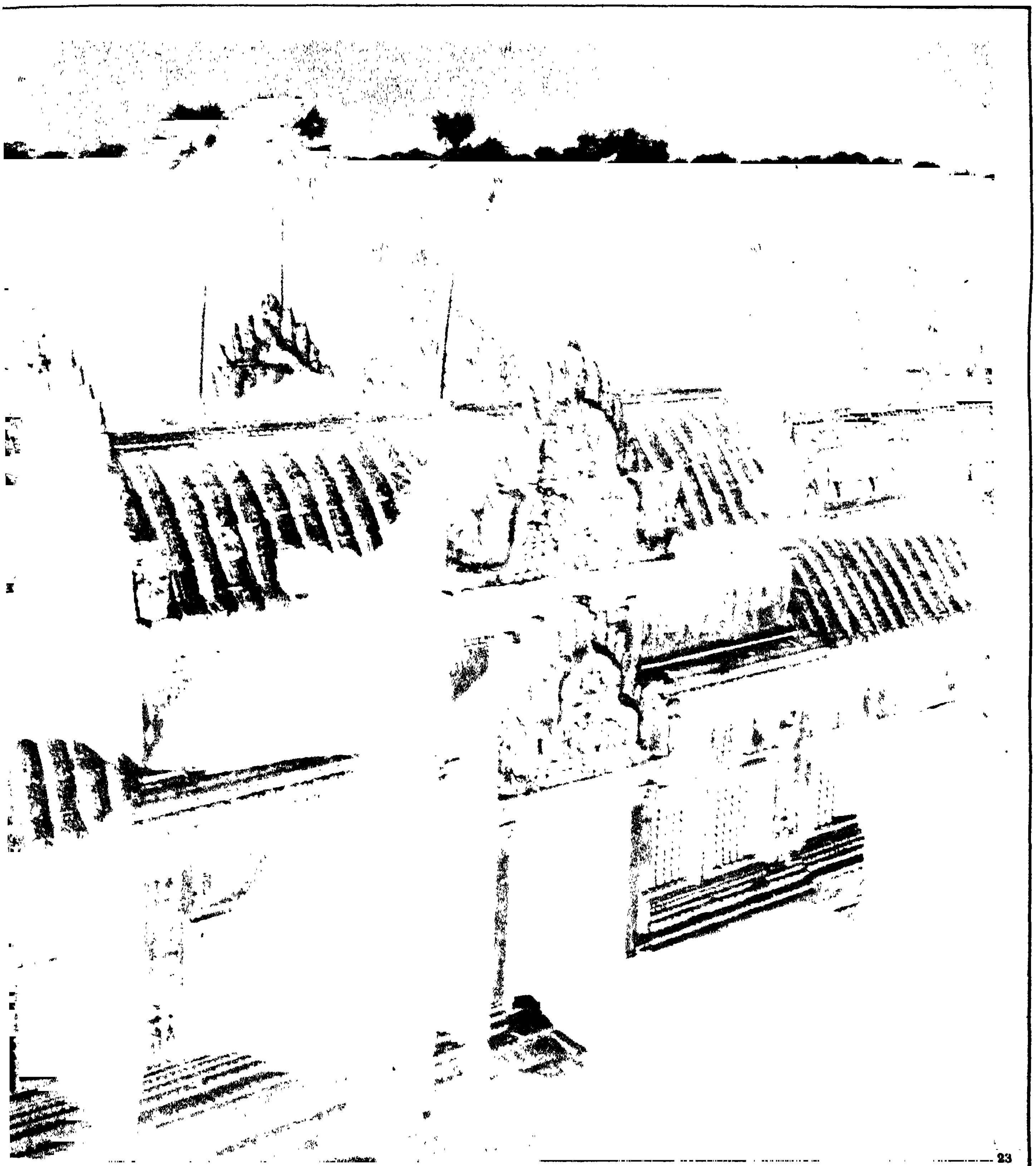
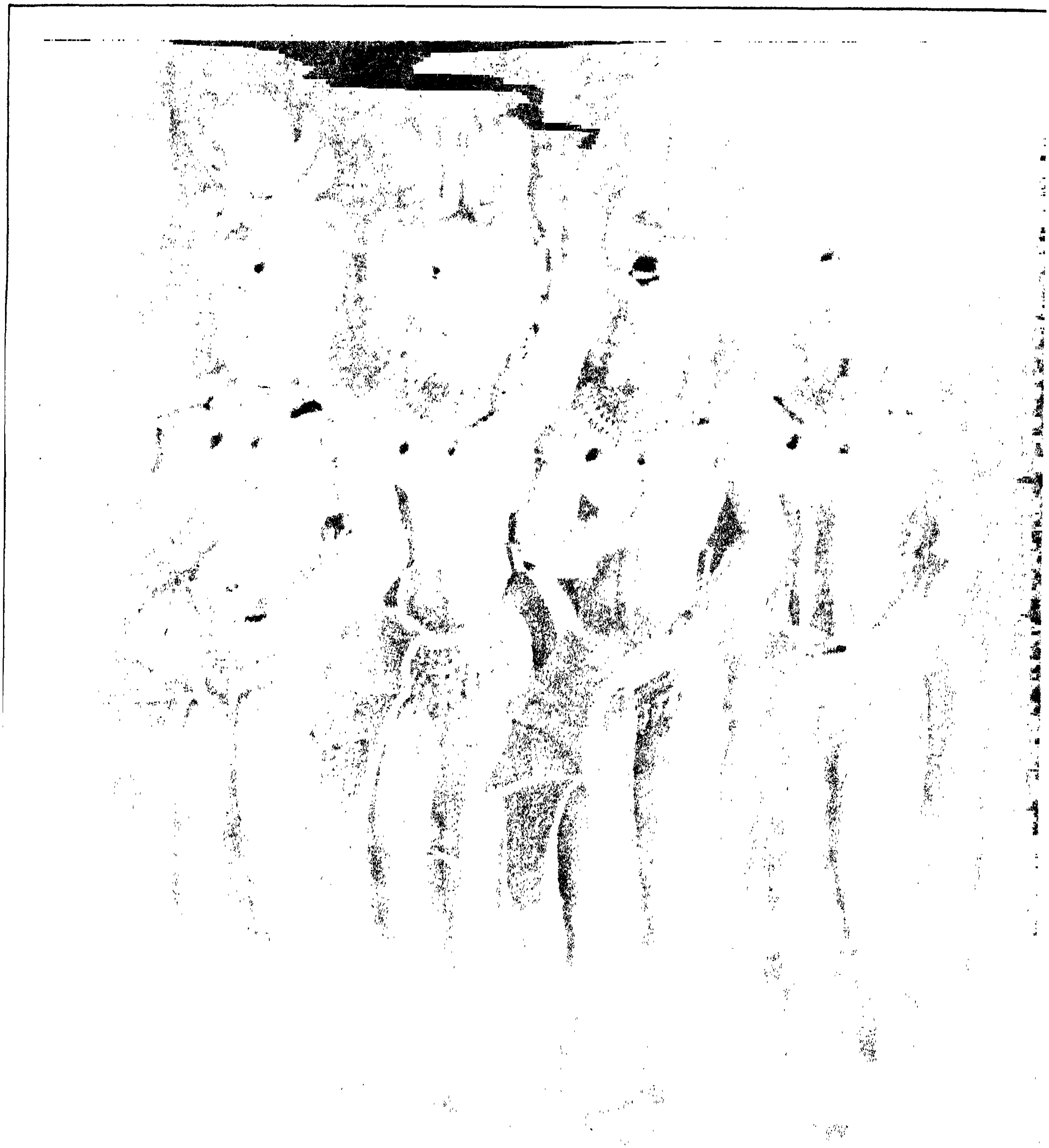
22 View of the central temple, an approach access road from the west across the courtyard. Angkor Vat.

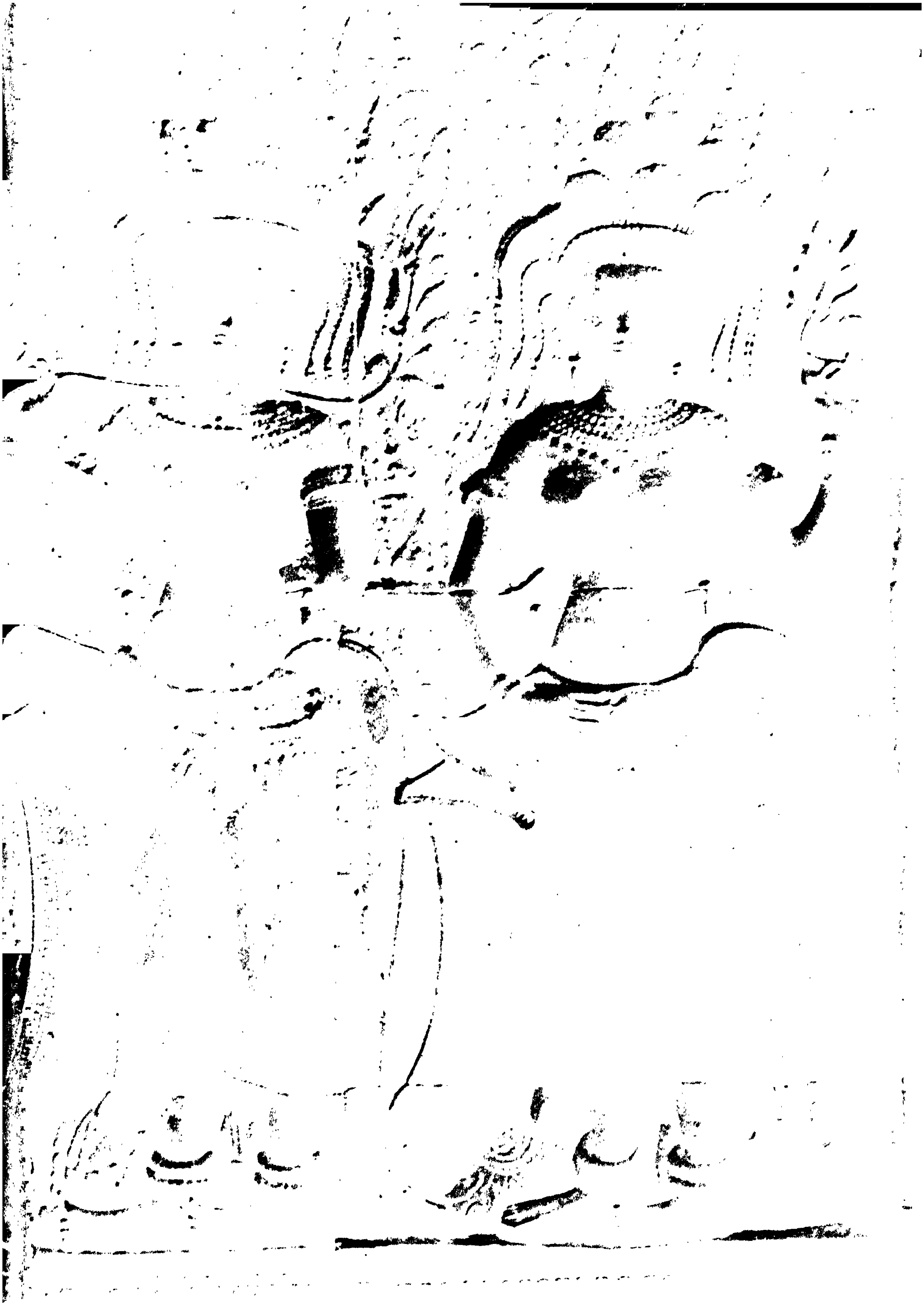
23 Inner courtyard showing decorative entrances and the reliefs on the wall. Angkor Vat.



24 *Apsaras, the beautiful dancers of Indra's heaven in the temple courtyard. These four heavenly figures in the elegant transparent clothes are carved with a fine chisel. Angkor Vat.*

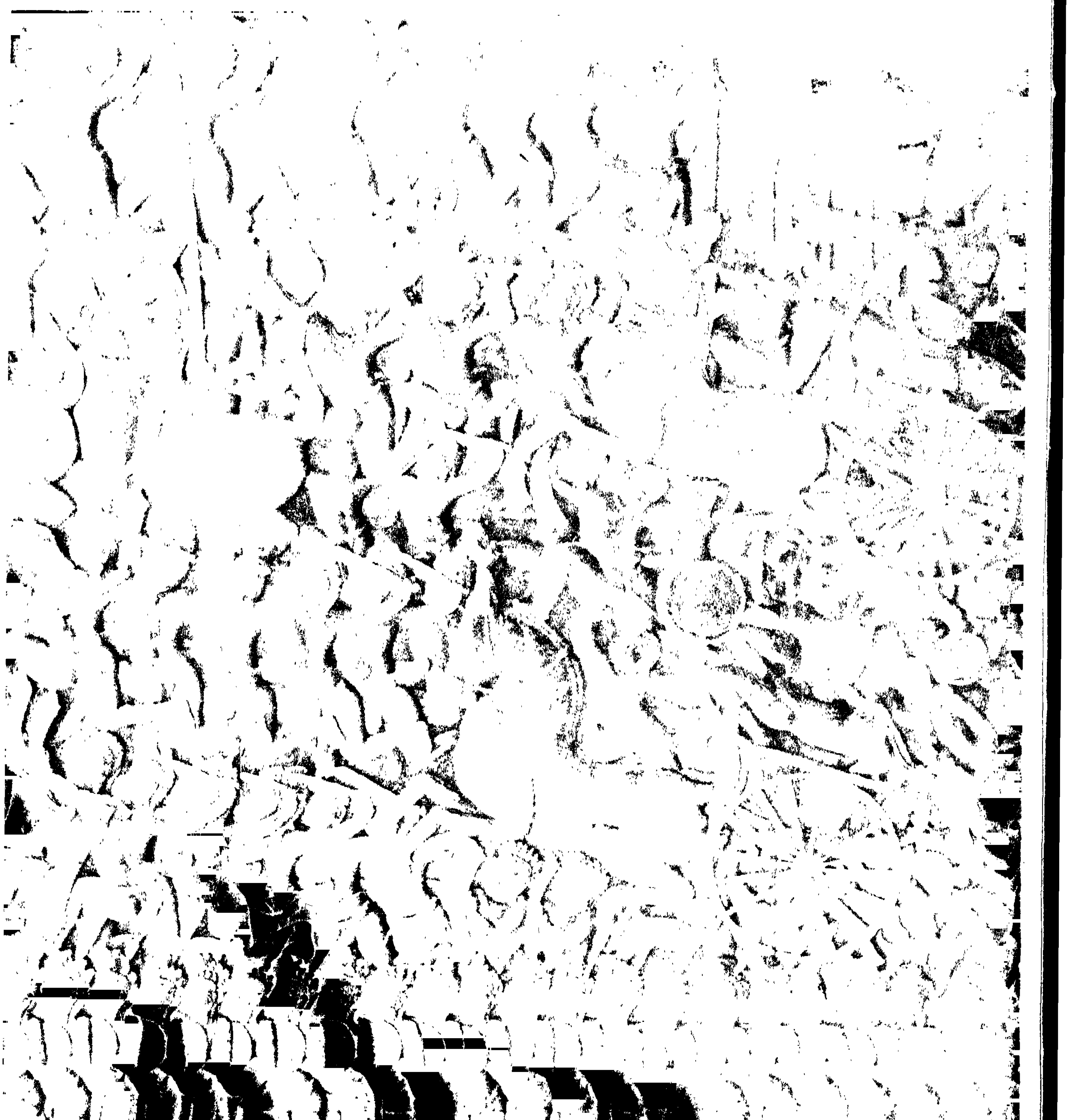
25 *Apsaras decorated in rich head dress. Angkor Vat.*





26 A typical sage portrayed in prayer, Angkor Vat.
27 Symbolic of the vast reliefs in this battle scene. An intricate composition chiselled by an imaginative carver of the highest skill. Angkor Vat.
28 The ruined monumental face enveloped by the dense fig tree, shows the victory of nature over man's works. Bayon.

26



accoutred general on an elephant, with four horse men before him, like outriders, is followed by another distinguished person on an elephant, two footmen carrying the figures of Garuda, and Hanuman and half a dozen more men. They are marching before the king, who is accoutred and who stands on his elephant, which bears on its head a diadem. After them come two chiefs and a palanquin in which the royal priest is seated. Behind it, we see a group of priests carrying the sacred fire in an ark. Unlike the processions all over the world, the Cambodian procession has its musicians in the rear. In the royal band, the trumpet, conch and cymbal are seen. With the band, two buffoons walk in a dancing gait.

The end of Suryavarman II is shrouded in mystery. All that we know is that, in the middle of the twelfth century, his cousin Bharanindravarman II succeeded him and introduced Mahayana Buddhism as the state religion. This faith was later to be fostered by his son, Jayavarman VII, who came to the throne at the age of fifty in the year 1181 and ruled until 1215 A.D.

The emphasis was to be shifted, in the life of Jayavarman VII, from the great Angkor Vat to the great Angkor Thom, or the Bayon, as it came to be called.

13. BAYON: (end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century A D.)

The style of Bayon was realised in the last, almost ultimate, complex built by Jayavarman VII. The remains of this tremendous Khmer capital constitute Angkor Thom (Nagare-Dhama) or great city.

Prince Jayavarman seems to have adopted Buddhism in his youth. He was not anxious to come to the throne when his father died. He allowed his brother Yasovarman II to become king, perhaps to avoid a civil war. And he volunteered to go on an expedition to defend Cambodia against Champa in the north.

Soon, however, Yasovarman II lost his life fighting a rebel noble. Tribhuvandityavarman. This was another occasion when Jayavarman could have occupied the throne. But when the prince returned from the Champa, the rebel noble had already been crowned king. Jayavarman did not assert his claim and busied himself as a loyal general and began to prepare the defence of the country.

Unfortunately, in 1177 A.D., the Champa king, Indravarman IV, made a daring raid around the sea to the mouth of the Mekong and up the river, until he reached the great lake near the capital of Cambodia. King Tribhuvandityavarman was killed. The army was defeated. The population was enslaved. The treasury was looted. The palaces were despoiled.

From his retreat, Prince, Jayavarman emerged and assumed the title of king. And, from the midst of defeat, break-down and collapse he initiated renascent efforts in every direction.

A mature man of fifty, he seems to have had tremendous physical and spiritual energies. He reorganised the agrarian economy, subsidised the transport and promoted the trade. He asserted his faith in the universal monarch, the Buddha, in his form as Bodhisattava, Avalokitesvara. And he began to build the first central shrine, consecrated to Buddhism in Cambodia. The king-god was replaced by Buddha-Raja.

In the name of righteousness, he subdued the aggressive Champa kingdom and made that part of the country a province of the Khmer Empire. He also ensured the safety of Cambodia by subduing the minor feudal kingdoms of the Malay Peninsula and extended his way westwards, towards Burma. He lived to the age of ninety. And during the forty years of his reign, he put hundreds of thousands of men to work, building dams, irrigation channels, sowing, planting, reaping-road-making. constructing bridges. shelter for travellers, hospitals, monasteries, temples, townships and monuments.

The Angkor Thom complex, built in the old new Yasodharapura, was the biggest of these townships.

And from this capital radiated roads in all directions of the Empire, connecting the small towns and markets.

The style of the Bayon naturally differs from the style of Angkor Vat, because the symbols of the Mahayana Buddhism were not to occupy the central place.

Ofcourse, Angkor Thom incorporates the traditional features of terrace architecture, with the pyramids rising to the pinnacle. as in the classical style.

The first experiment of the Bayon was made in the temple of Ta Prohm, which was a site that has survived from the ancient royal capital in timber, in the northern area near Siemreap river.

These shrines lie east of Angkor Thom. They conformed to a complicated design and had the gargantuan face towers. The former shrine was large. In its outer enclosure were 60 square shrines. There were also rest-houses in the inner enclosure. Its name is given in its inscriptions as Rajavihara. It was so rich as to maintain over 100 hospitals. The scriptions gave staggering statistics of the establishments of the temple, its properties, services and endowments. The immense space occupied by the temple would have held hundreds of thousands of pilgrims.

Banteay Kdei east of Ta Prohm was designed on the same lines as Ta Prohm, but on a smaller scale.

The Coiled Snake

In the second period, the three temples mentioned above were completed and a fourth one, a charming little fane, Rajasri, now called Neak Pean, was constructed in the centre of an artificial pool, east of Preah Khan. Neak Pean and two shrines, West Mebon and East Mebon, respectively, in the middle of the two reservoirs West Baray and East Baray, are like the mandapas in the centre of the sacred tanks of almost all great temples of South India. Neak Pean (meaning coiled snake) is so called from a pair of snakes shown as encircling the lower steps of the circular platform on which the temple has been built. The platform is fourteen meters in diameter. The beautiful four storeyed shrine is dedicated to Lokesvara.

Preah Khan of Kompong Svai

Cambodian archaeology had a big surprise, when in 1937, was discovered, from the air, the ruin of a large temple, with the largest enclosure in all Cambodia: Preah Khan of Kompong Svai. This lies sixty miles east of Beng Mea Lea. It is five kilometres square, while Benteay Chhmar, Angkor Thom and Angkor Vat are respectively 4, 3.3 and 1.9 kilometres square. It is not known whether this Preah Khan was begun by Suryavarman I and completed by Jayavarman VII. As in Phimeanakas and Ta Keo, we find in Preah Khan, galleries covered by arched roofs of sandstone. The ruins of a resthouse show that pilgrims used to visit the shrine.

The temple of Ta Prohm, built on flat earth, was surrounded by a double stone wall. There were three courtyards, surrounded by three galleries. Only the first of these galleries was vaulted. The entrance pavilions were in the middle of each site. The central shrine was a huge mass with four corner towers. There were pavilions, sanctuaries and towers in the inner space.

Another temple, Preah Khan (Sacred Sword), now overgrown by the jungle, was built on a rectangular plan, crowded and overflowing with libraries, towers, pavilions, chapels and samadhis. This was perhaps used as a palace by Jayavarman, while the Angkor Thom was being built, as there are wide roads, guarded by gods and demons, with a sacred snake in their lap all along the paths.

The sculptures of the Buddha are reminiscent of the Gupta periods in India. And these coexisted with Brahmanical figures.

The new city of Angkor Thom took over this feature in front of the entrance pavilions.

In view of the threat of foreign invasions, Jayavarman VII first had a big stone rampart built around the royal city of Angkor Thom. Then was dug a deep moat, 330 feet wide and a laterite wall eight miles long and twenty feet high. This wall formed a wide gallery or promenade, at times 80 feet wide. There were five entrance gates in the rampart, before which the moat was bridged and extended by stone roads, with snake balustrades.

The gateways are couched in the impressive idiom of the Bayon, where everything dramatises the illumination of the Buddha.

With a guard room on either side, the lofty gates, with their head towers, are imposing even today. The figure of the three headed elephant has been sculpted on either side. The avenues are flanked by wage balustrades.

On a plinth are three towers about 700 feet high, from which the faces of Avalokitesvara radiate the benevolent smile of the Enlightened One.

This smile, radiating from all the Bodhisattava faces, and from the face of Jayavarman himself (in the statue ascribed to him now in the Phnom Penh Museum), reveals the beauty of the ethos to which this king aspired.

In one of his inscriptions Jayavarman has said:

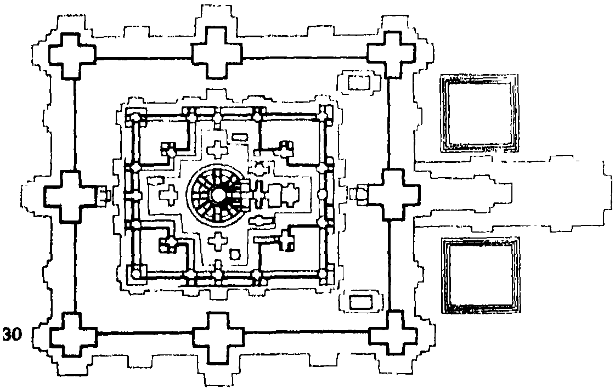
'The king suffers from the pains of his subjects more than from his own. For it is the pain of the people that causes the pain of kings. And not their own pain'.

The deep understanding, implicit in this maxim, shows the dynamic calm that Jayavarman had reached in his still centres. The closed eyes of the simple image of him, with the indrawn breath, and the tender opening of the lips, in the smile of contemplation, indicates that he, who had rebuilt Cambodia, and opened the roadways on all sides, had also penetrated against the barriers of ignorance, insensitiveness and rigidity, into himself—into that world of surpassing compassion for all living things, symbolised in the gracious smile.

We do not know if this particular sculpture is a portrait of Jayavarman VII, but the fact has little meaning. Actually, all the giant Bodhisattava images in Angkor Thom are instinct with this smile, realising for the whole world the shining splendour of the Buddha's illumination, which communicates to all the pilgrims the ideal to be achieved, of encompassing the earth, of extending the consciousness across the whole universe, and of becoming one with it.

It is from this profound understanding that we must see the crowded scenes of human existence on the walls of the Bayon. From the smallest act of eating and drinking, fetching and carrying, fighting the righteous wars, to looking after those in pain in the hospital, or praying in a chapel, or sweeping the floor of red flowers—each act is sanctified as part of human existence, to be lived in the here and the now. It is likely that, after centuries of effort in building for glory and power and pervalence, the art of Jayavarman VII achieves a humanism of the highest order, in so far as it is not only the stones which speak, but the whole kingdom seems to express itself in a creative life, through which each individual could aspire to enlightenment.

The miracle is that the philosophy of the king, so far inspired the sculptors that they were able to embody, in all the intricate details, the whole geometry of the royal city, raising it above the traditional structures of Angkor Vat, by the new element of understanding Man's fate, and crystalised this spiritual experience above the old stones into new starting forms, shapes and experience.



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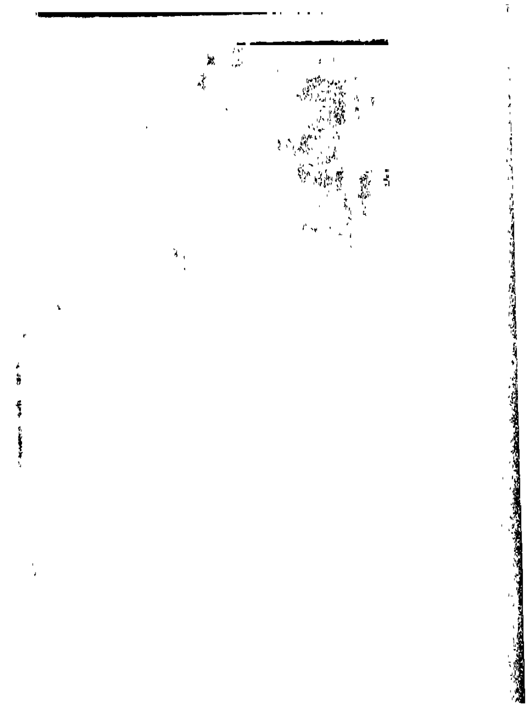

29 *Detail of the magnificent tower. Bayon.*
30 *Plan. Bayon.*
31 *General view of Angkor Thom (Bayon), with its magnificent towers.*

32, 33 *The ruins merging in the foliage. Angkor Thom (Bayon).*
34 *The balustrade with naga guardians on the approach to the Angkor Thom (Bayon).*

35 *The liquid movement of the Khmer dance comes through the lyrical lines of the relief sculpture. Angkor Thom (Bayon).*

36, 37 *Two friezes showing everyday life. The fishes represent fertility and plenty. Angkor Thom (Bayon).*

37

38 The so-called leper King is interpreted by Professor Coedes as a statue of Yama, the god of death. Angkor Thom (Bayon).

39 The seven-headed naga is a refulgent image of the soul of the people of Cambodia, who preferred the legend of their origin from the snakes. The snake is the symbol of the soul in Hindu Mythology. Angkor Thom (Bayon).

40 Detail of a boy from the Elephant Terrace. Angkor Thom (Bayon).

38

40

39

There were thousands of free statues of Bodhisattavas, of seated Buddhas and of beautiful nymphs, placed in the corridors of the palaces, near the reliefs of the fishermen, the jugglers, the cooks and soldiers. The king had imbued the consciousness of the craftsmen, so that each configuration seems to seek the breakthrough from the mass of ordinariness into the intensity of passionless passion.

Witness, for instance, the so called statue of the leper king whoever he was. The great personage, with his upturned moustache, is seen struggling to achieve human shape. Once thought to be a portrait of Yasovarman I, or a Kubera and a Saive devotee, Professor Georges Coedes has drawn attention to an inscribed label on the sculpture, suggesting it is a figure of Dharmadhipati or the god of death.

The Angkor Thom complex does not seem to have ended with the vast structures of the Buddha's faces. There was built the terrace of the leper king, the royal terrace, also called the Elephant terrace, where obviously festivals took place in the presence of the kings.

Banteay Chhmar

To Jayavarman VII we owe Banteay Chhmar (meaning the citadel of the cat) a ludicrous name for a sanctuary which ranked with Angkor Thom and Preah Khan of Kompong Svai in sheer immensity and magnificence and with the Bayon in quaintness of design. Once a popular and populous sanctuary at the foot of the Dongrek mountains in the north-western part of the empire, it is now the most inaccessible and ruined of all Khmer monuments. It had all the appurtenant features, a tank with a shrine in the centre, a moat which is now dry, massive gates surmounted by face towers. Naga balustrades and galleries whose walls bear bas reliefs of Buddhist lore.

After Jayavarman VII had achieved, in his full life of ninety years, one of the most comprehensive, subtle and gracious human empires, nothing much could have been added. Perhaps the very perfection of his realisations precluded new efforts.

At any rate, the next century was troubled by feudal instability, lack of faith and devotion, without which there can be neither life nor art of an enduring character.

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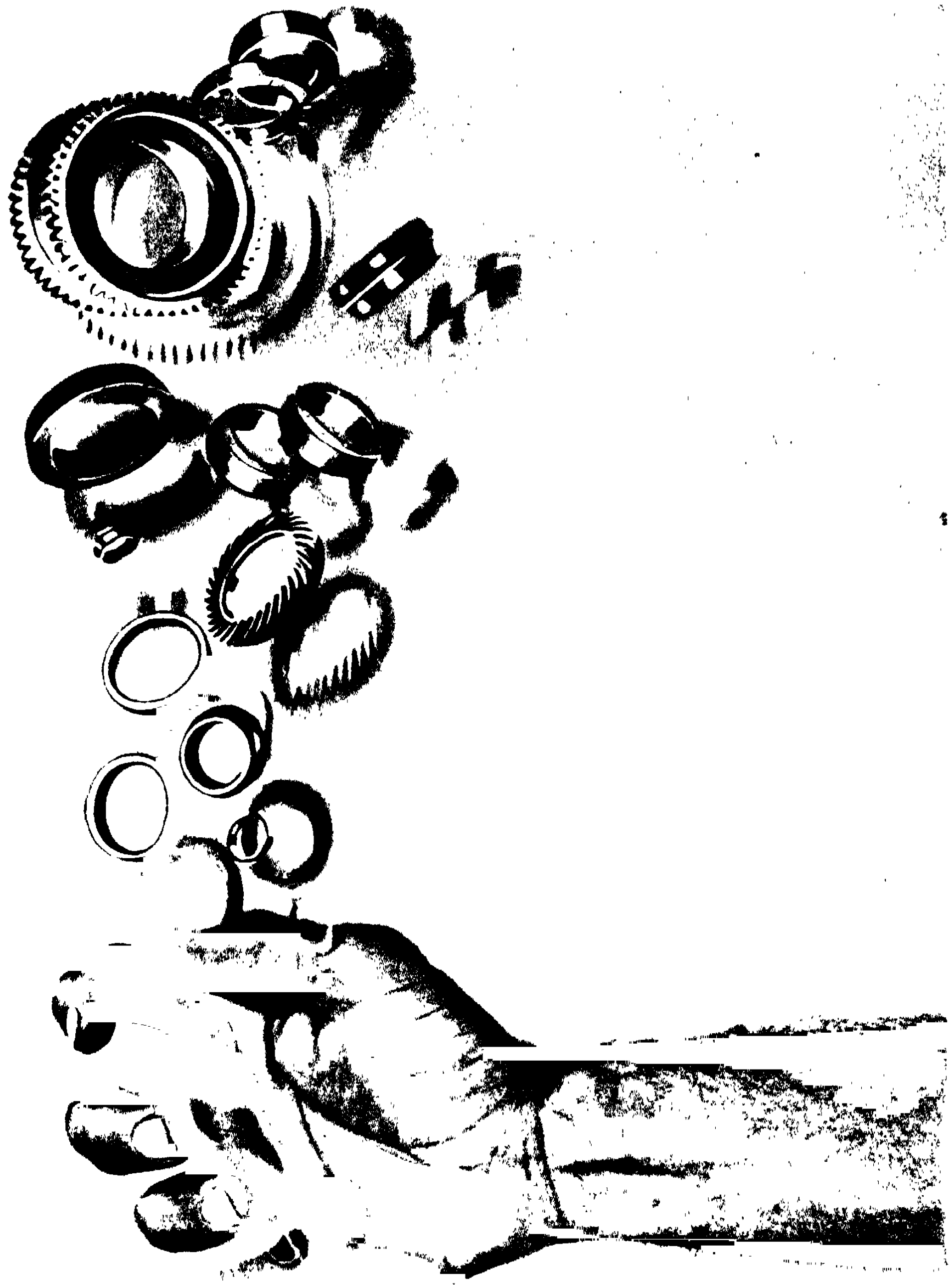

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EDITORIAL

Bangla Desh Heritage

GREEN AND GOLD AND BLUE AND GREY

The Background:

by Syed Ali Ahsan

ARCHITECTURE WITHOUT ARCHITECTS

SPACE RELATIONS ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF THE NEAR AND THE FAR

1 Mahasthan

2 Paharpur

3 Mainamati

'RETURN TO THE NATIVE COUNTRY'

Preliminary to Islamic Architecture

ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

1 Mamluk Style

2 The Ilyas Shahi Style

3 Classical Phase of Architecture in Gaur

4 The Husain Shahi Style

5 Mughal Style

REGIONAL RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE IN BENGAL

A Study in the Sources of Origin and Character

by Hitearanjan Sanyal

Cover: Decorated Mihrab of the Adina Mosque.

MARG offers this homage to the Heritage of Bangla Desh in the spirit of utmost humility. The surviving remains are so rich that it would be difficult to include all the monuments in the slim volume, to which we are reduced by the present contingencies. We have, therefore, decided to present architectural remains in one special issue, sculpture in the second and crafts in the third, at various intervals.

This number could not have been compiled without the sagacious advice of Syed Ali Ahsan, Vice Chancellor of Jehangirabad University, Savar, Dacca, and data from the researches of Prof. Dani, the late Percy Brown and the British interpreters.

The original interpretation of Shri Hitearanjan Sanyal is the latest commentary on the Bengalisation of all cultures which came here.

MARG owes gratitude to the warm hospitality given by Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, Mr. M. Khalique, Mr. A. G. Hazari, Mr. Ajit Neogy, and several District Officials, during the tour of the Editorial team across the length and breadth of Bangla Desh. Dr. Gafoor of the Bangla Desh Archaeological Survey gave unstinted help in the visits to monuments.

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Bangla Desh Heritage

Culture comes from cultivation.

In the earlier societies, dance and music were associated with the gathering of harvests. And, even today, the bulk of the people create their heightened awareness of life, through the sheer delight, in the processes of growth, in the fulfilment of their unconscious drives, and in the expression of their aspirations towards outsight.

Rabindranath Tagore seized upon this truth, when he began to live on the banks of the river Padma, in the most mature periods of his life. He found the inspirations for his songs in the Baul singers, the fisher men on the river, and the peasants in the villages.

On the uprises above the rice fields stand the clusters of the village thatched huts. They dot the whole earth. The tall palm trees bend down on the little houses graciously offering gifts of coconut. Broad leafed plantain trees loaded with bunches of bananas cover their flanks. Tendrils and stalks of bamboos shoot up like green fountains around the village.

The architecture without architects of the peasant hut, is a miracle of achievement. The neatly plastered, slightly tapering mud walls, with windows like the souls of women looking out of the sequestered shades, are topped by thick sloping thatched roofs, with graceful tapering corners.

The idyllic village is paradisal, inspite of the sadness of the human condition inside.

No wonder that the sophisticated builders often took the peasant hut for a model for temples and mosques and mausoleums.

The great Adina mosque, and architecture of Gaur-Pandua of the Sultans took many decorative motifs from the root arts of Bangla Desh. And the Mughals changed over from the stone of the north to elaborate brick structures here.

Nowhere, is the deep interconnection between creativeness and the processes of labour, more obvious than in Bangla Desh. One of the commonest items for use on the rivers of this landscape, the fishing net, is a work of tremendous skill and imagination.

Throughout the known history of Eastern India, then, the hands and hearts of the folk were able to make the objects of daily use, informed with the quick of the people's passionate temperaments, alive from finger tips.

The earliest terracottas of the Maurya period, from Mahasthan Bogra, have this quality of aliveness, as also the stupas of Paharpur and Mainamati, even the contemporary toys of Kushtiya, the architecture of Dacca, speak of the wonder in the big eyes of the folk, the builders, the masons and the carpenters.

The significant quality which, than, lifts the Bangla Desh heritage in architecture, in all periods of history, is the living touch of the people, the impact of the heavenly landscape, and the persistence of the roots behind the creative urges of the folk.

And the beauty of their forms so impressed the incomers, that at least one of them, the Emperor Shah Jehan, took away the style of the peasant roof hut to put on his throne in Delhi, from where it was adopted far and wide in northern India.

1. The texture of split bamboo mat approximate to a perfect

Green and Gold and Blue and Grey

The Background

The geographical layout of Bangla Desh is formed by the confluence of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. Bangla Desh is the largest and possibly the most fertile delta of the world. It is a land which is irrigated all through by rivers. Here, there are vast expanses of soft alluvial deposits, which most of the time remain inundated. As such the inhabitants of this landscape evolved various techniques of deep-water cultivation and fishing. Unstable and exceedingly difficult communication system produced a cultural pattern which is decentralised and somewhat isolated from the rest of the sub-continent. Politically, as well as in respect of its socio-cultural order, Bangla Desh remained comparatively free from the influence of the imperial consolidation of the Hindu and Muslim periods. Inaccessibility and fertility of this region played a very decisive role in the formation of the cultural and social pattern of Bangla Desh.

Climatically Bangla Desh falls within the monsoon zone. Frequent floods and intense rainfall is, therefore, a permanent feature of life in this country. For the people of Bangla Desh, life is a constant struggle against violent storms, rain and thunder. Each year a large number of huts and houses are washed away by the mighty currents of the raging rivers. All these lead us to one conclusion : the land reformation in this region, which is formed almost entirely by alluvial deposits has no sense of stability or permanence about it. In other words, the dwelling houses or buildings constructed on the soft and unstable soil of this land are inherently weak and as such do not last very long. So the peasants tend to build them on little hillocks, raised above the level of the earth.

The hills that we come across in the Chittagong region are composed mainly of sand, though in some places formations of stone may be noticed. They are covered all over by trees and shrubs and if we dig into these hills we find the soil to be soft and sandy.

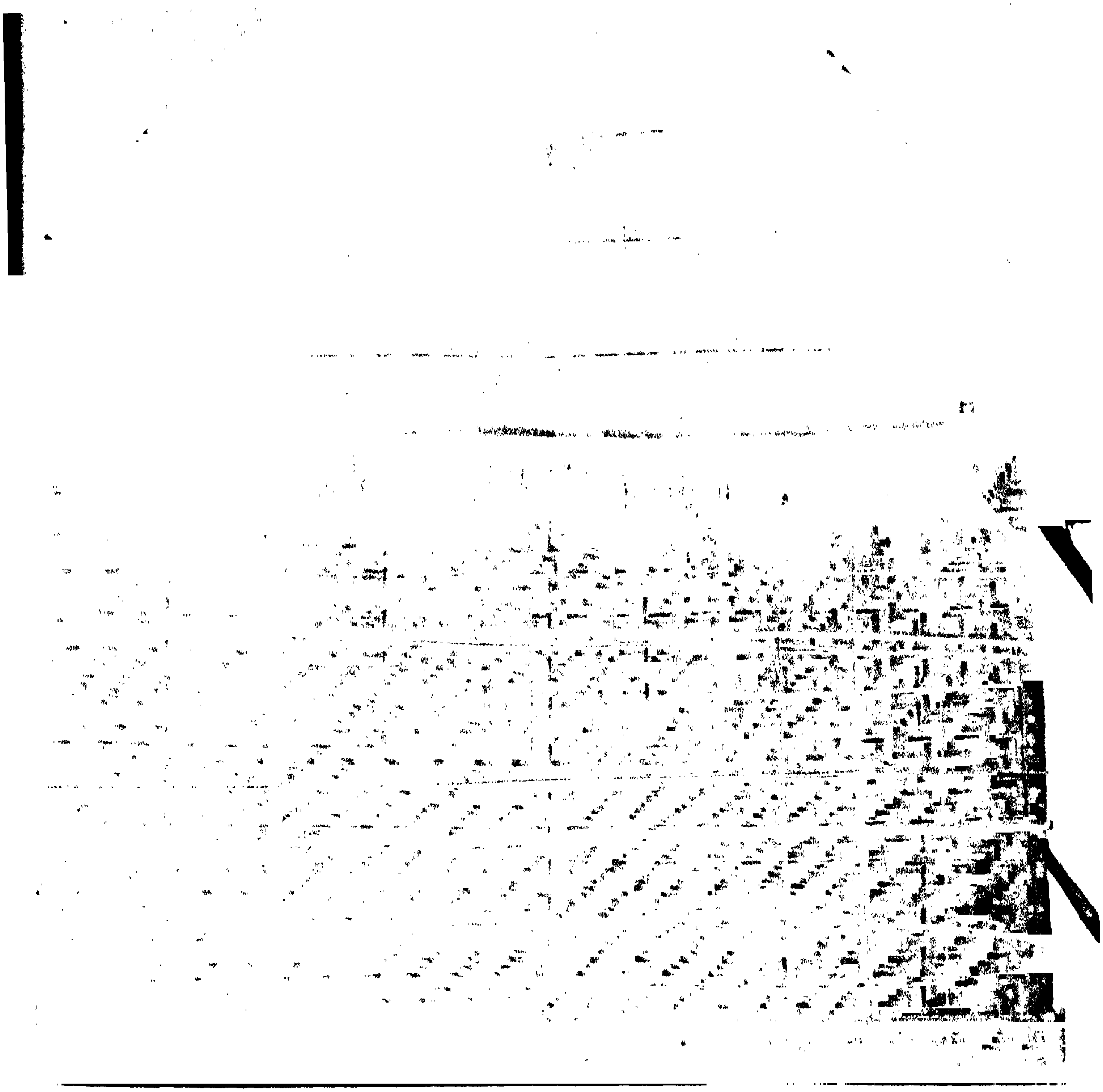
Hence stone architecture and making of statues and representations of objects in the round or relief by chiselling stone has never been a popular art of the people of Bangla Desh though the sculptures of gods and goddesses of superb craftsmanship were carved out of imported stone, under kingly patronage.

No trace of the ancient architecture, if there were any, is to be found anywhere in this region. This is because the buildings constructed with earthen bricks failed to withstand the onslaughts of rainy weather and shifting nature of the soil for long. So we find many prehistoric relics in this land.

Therefore, it is not possible for us to understand and evaluate the culture of this country in its prehistoric context. Of course, it is not impossible, that there might be some prehistoric relics in the countryside. In literature, in poetry, mythological tales and folk-lores, there are references to famous buildings, lakes and royal palaces, but their ruins are not traceable. These have been transformed into hearsay and fairy tales.

The climate of the country, as has already been said, is not at all conducive to the preservation of the works of ancient architecture. The raintall, here, is excessive. Often the floods cause extensive damage and destruction. The rivers constantly keep on changing their courses. The changing of courses by the Padma is almost a regular phenomenon. The banks of rivers and the coastline of the bay, is constantly getting eroded. The people normally build their dwelling houses with wood and bamboo and sometimes with mud. These do not last long. Even the houses built with earthen bricks, though a little more durable than the huts of bamboo and mud, do not last very long. The old buildings of this country thus have all gradually crumbled away.

For the cultural history of the pre-Muslim period we have to depend mainly on the different types of royal grants inscribed on copper, old manuscripts, paintings, coins and different articles of daily-use. In the course of archaeological explorations, we have carried out excavations here and there, as a result of which we have discovered three important ruins of the pre-Muslim period. One of them is at Mahasthan, the other at Mainamati, and the third at Paharpur.



2

Architecture without Architects

In the idyllic landscape of Bangla Desh, everything seems to have been made by God, from the lush bamboo groves, the swaying palms, and the split banana leaves, screening the torrid sunshine, as its rays fall on the earth.

But man seems to have improved upon God, by building the village houses, on piles of earth, mounds and uprises, connected by causeways.

These houses, constructed from natural materials, mud, bamboo and thatch, have been conceived by instinctive artists, with an awareness of the triangular forms of sloping roofs, the cubist weave of the mat and the accuracy of measures.

The constructions were obviously evolved a few thousand years ago, and are developments of the sense of space of the primitivist rural consciousness.

The aesthetic theories of the post-renaissance period in Europe, were supposedly built on *rationality*. The earlier peoples were not supposed to have an aesthetic sense.

This attitude is disproved by the feeling for organic construction of the primitives, which we see in eastern India.

The peasants of Bengal seem to have retained the joy of playing with materials, to create structures.

One cannot speculate on whether the villagers inherited the ancient idea of God as cosmos, in which the life of man was supposed to be imbedded during his tenancy of the earth. It is likely, however, that the recreation of structures, within the cosmos, was conceived as part of the function of God in man. And as, primitive man considers God to be perfect, who cannot make anything imperfect, so man, as part of God, also strains after perfection.

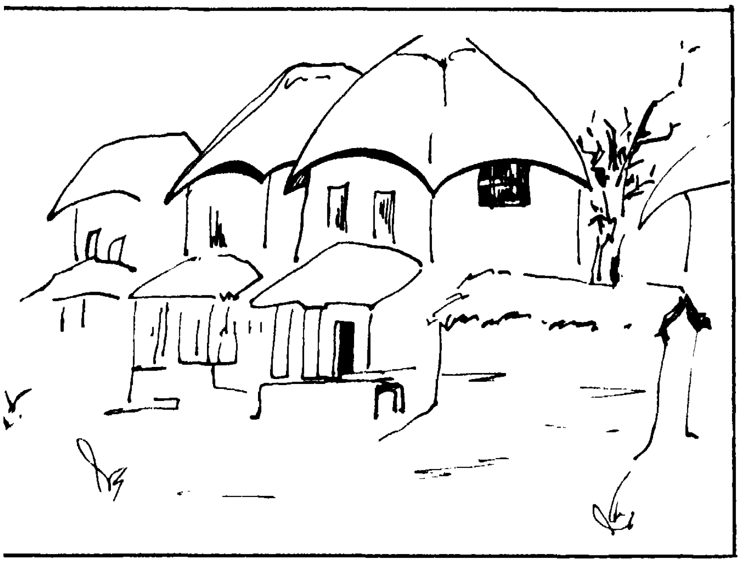
That is why the form of the basic peasant hut was always put as the house of God under the superstructure of the shrine and the peasant craftsmen made everything in it as perfectly as he could.

In so far as the village house is, thus, made from a feeling of oneness with the divine, there is no subject object duality in this structure. Everything belongs. The materials, the straw-woven mat, the split bamboo, the mud, are all used to bring about the shelter, in a sacred space, to give the human family peace and calm and balance, in the visible world, where there is an intense struggle to create the means of subsistence.

One cannot verify the survival of these aesthetic feelings in the big cities of our sub-continent, built for the fake glory of the conquerors. But when one uses the word 'idyllic', in regard to the villages of Bangla Desh, one is recalling to mind the habits of those societies, which had a connection with cosmic space, where the artist was imitating God, as creator and builder, in the hope that he would become God.

We are unable to reconstruct the aesthetic of the consciousness, which built the village house, except in terms of immanence, emergence, or transcendence. Because in primitive man, the sense of connection with the space around him is instinctive, whereas in the contemporary industrial civilisation, we see the pleasure of aesthetic experience by self-conscious efforts to realise beauty. In the peasant hut, beauty is part of the function of building, even as the function of building is part of creation itself. And creation is self-realisation.

It is possible that the peasants of Bangla Desh still retain this kind of aesthetic sense, unconsciously-consciously. Certainly, however, the feeling for the use of materials, the approximation to the sense of adequate space in which they live and move and have their being, as well as the actual construction of the house, shows the survival of feeling, as dynamic thought, through which they transcend the many imperfections brought by historical change.



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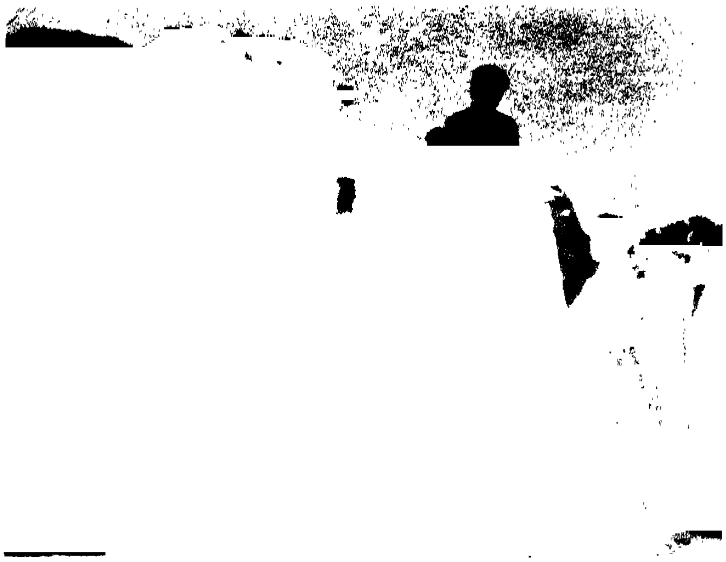
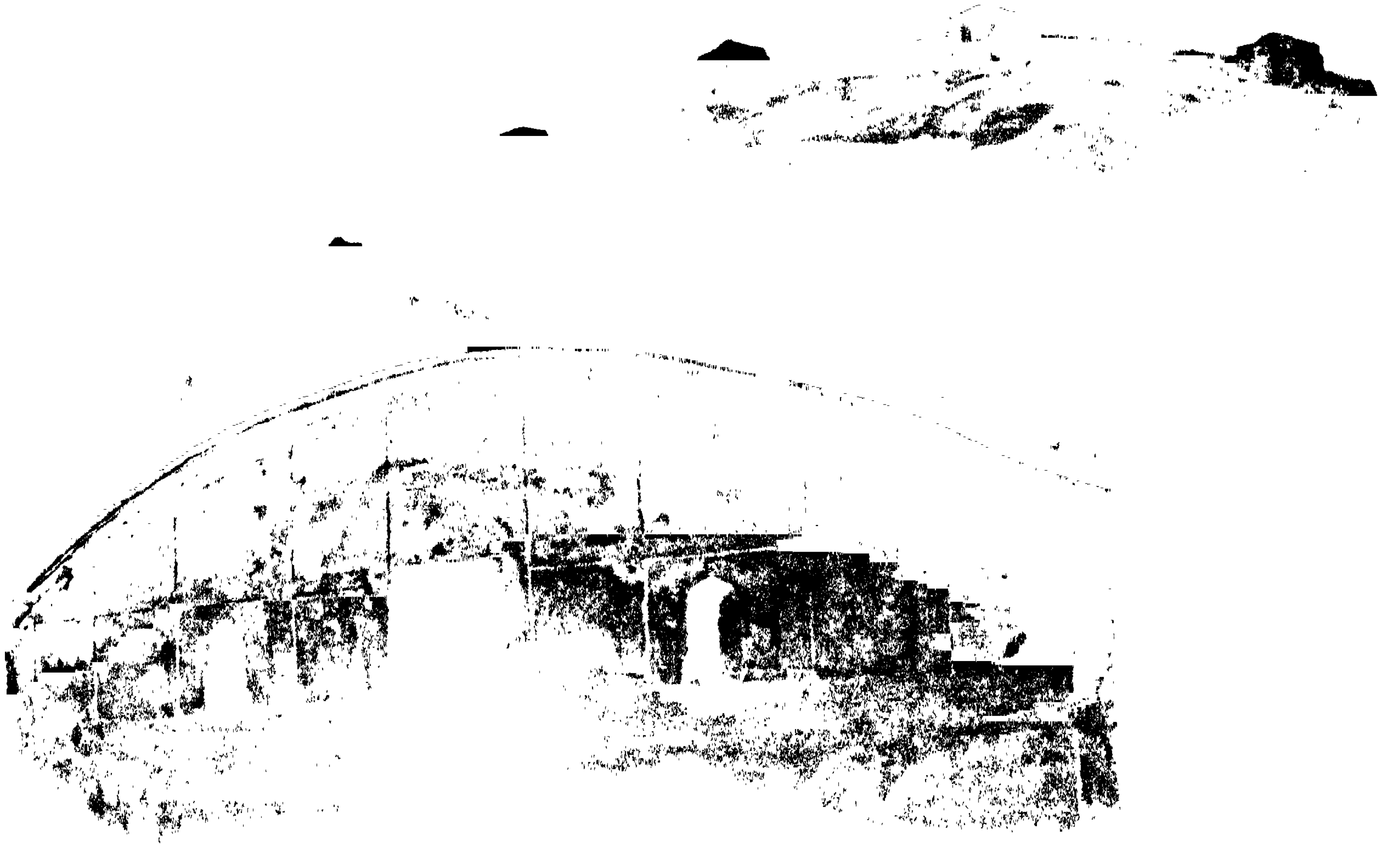


3

2, 3, 4. The form of the triangular roof on the square or rectangular wall derives from a geometry which the primitive mind evolved through lila or play.

5. The tomb of Fath Khan in Gaur (Cir. 1660. The first shock of seeing the replica of the peasant hut of Bangla Desh over the Tomb of Fath Khan in Gaur makes one dumb. The pragmetic mediaeval builder seems to have yielded to the primitivist aesthetic of the villager from a sense of realism.



6. *The same consideration of the dominant influence of the regional peasant hut style on the self-conscious builders of the temples are obvious in the Jore Bangla temple or shrine in Pabna.*

Space Relations according to the Law of the Near and the Far

1. **Mahasthan**
2. **Paharpur**
3. **Mainamati**

MAHASTHAN

The earliest surviving remains of architecture in Bangla Desh are in the ruins of ancient Pundranagar, now buried in the Mahasthan area (3rd century B.C. to 6th century A.D.)

This was a Buddhist settlement. As archaeological evidence suggests, it was in existence even before the 3rd century B.C., before the rule of the Buddhist missionary Emperor of India, Ashoka Maurya. The faith of the Enlightened One seems to have received fresh inspirations during Ashoka's reign. The proximity of Northern Bengal to Pataliputra, the capital of Magadha, suggests that the Emperor was a frequent visitor here. And, as the master himself, born not too far away in the Himalayan Terai, had wandered in this region, staying in the villages with the folk, the souvenirs of his wanderings were preserved in quite a few settlements.

The Mahasthan site as well as Paharpur, not far away to the west, and Mainamati towards the south, remained important settlements of the Buddhist monks from the pre-Christian centuries till the late mediaeval period.

The peculiar characteristics of the Buddhist settlements in East Bengal was that the monks, who preached the gospel of the Buddha, took over from the people around them the magical practices, symbols and poetry of the earth. In fact, here in Bangla Desh, the monks lived nearer the villages than they did anywhere else.

The terrain of Bengal with its abundant waters had compelled human settlements to be poised on small mounds, raised above the fields. The Buddhist monks seem to have constructed their mounds on the parallel of the villages.

The terracotta remains of the Mauryan and Sunga periods confirm that, throughout history, the Buddhist priests, together with the people, moulded their figurines of the Buddha, the Bodhisattavas or potential Buddhas, as well as the bricks for their mounds, from the soft alluvial earth of the landscape.

The ruins of Mahasthan spread along the western banks of the Karatoya river, about eight miles north of the Bogra town.

There is a massive fortified oblong enclosure, about fifteen feet above the surrounding crop fields, on the south-west and northern part of the enclosure. The ancient ruins and mounds are dotted in a semi-circle about five miles almost, as though they were hamlets where the monks lived near the mound.

As the banks of the Karatoga river remained sacred both to the Buddhists and the Hindus, it has been difficult to separate the structures of the parallel faiths.

The researches of archaeologists from Buchanan Hamilton, in the early 9th century, and later by O'Donnel Beveridge, Cunningham, Dixit, Bannerji, Sen and Najimud-din-Ahmed, have revealed to us that the Mahasthan area, Pundrakshetra and Pundranagar, were the same site which assumed different names.

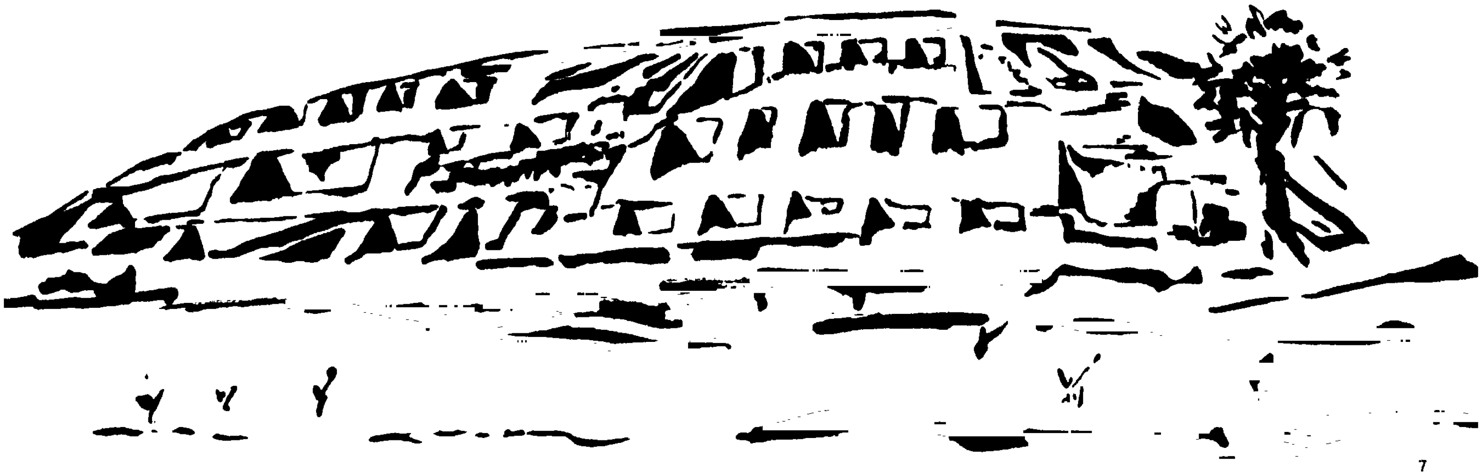
The present name, Mahasthan, literally means the great place. This may have been originally Maha-Ashnan, or the great bathing place. The Muslims called it Mastangarh after the first Muslim saint, Shah Sultan Balkhi Mahesawar, of the mid-mediaeval period, whose alleged tomb is situated on the south eastern corner of the citadel. Later it was sanctified by Majnu Shah Mastana Burhana, the fakir leader of Bengal, who made it the main centre of his activities during 1763 to 1787 A.D.

The early Buddhist settlement was authenticated by the discovery, in 1931, of a lime stone inscribed tablet. This is written in six lines of Ashokan Brahmi script of 3rd century B.C., which records a famine in Bengal and the measures taken by the Mahamatra of Pundranagar to meet the situation.

Pundranagar seems to have derived from the forgotten Pundra people, who are alleged to have lived in this area before the Aryan infiltration into the sub-continent. The echoes of Pundranagar, in myth and legend, suggest that the earlier tribes were the original neolithic inhabitants of the countryside, whom the Aryans reduced to the status of Dasyus, or Nishadas, meaning crude barbarians.

As no Bengal king is mentioned in the early Vedic hymns or texts it seems that the primitives of Bangla Desh were from a different racial stock and culture than the Aryans.

There are references to the land of the Pundras in the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, the Buddhist and Jain legends. A gold coin of the Kushan king Kaniska has been found in Mahasthan.



7 *Mahasthan mound: The stupa holds the balance between space and time in the flux of the Universe. In this illusory world, the cell structure is an abstraction of the peasant hut laid out in a beehive pattern, in the same pattern as the plastic manner of the Bangla Desh village on the hill.*

The moulding of the earth into brick and terracotta figurines was obviously a craft, which was shared among the peoples all the way from the Indus Valley to the Gangetic Delta. And whatever the reasons for the creation of the Buddhist stupas elsewhere, in Bangla Desh the necessity of building mounds clearly made the fashioning of the circular mound structure imperative.

The treatment of space for the stupa mound by the Buddhist follows the pattern of the primitivist mind verging on the awareness of the cosmos. The totality of the universe is supposed to be in flux. Each being is being transformed by its karma. Plants, animals, human beings, are all in the state of metamorphosis. The substance of the earth is made up of particles. These elements cohere together through decay of previous formations and are likely to change.

Within the premises of this eternal flux, there are certain signposts of transience, houses, which one must leave to become houseless. One must remain aware all the time, however, that every form of being will crumble and be transmogrified. The last words of the Buddha to Ananda, before he died at Kushinanghara, were: 'transient are all forms.'

The memory of the Enlightened One was, however, sought to be enshrined by the worshippers in tombs called stupas, mounds or relic hills.

In the beginning, these stupas were merely heaps. But the static nature of the earth, before the one or two-dimensional mind of his followers led to the elaboration of a more and more elaborate harmonious rounded structure.

The lower peoples, who followed the Buddha to forget the four tier system of the Hindu caste society, had peopled the invisible universe, beyond their one-dimensional view of the earth, with a spirit behind everything. They had believed in tree souls and snake souls and mountain souls —everything was animate to them.

The cosmogony of the Buddhist monks developed the consciousness of the followers into the two dimensions between the earth and the ultimate Nirvan. And, in between these two planes, on the symbolic mound, they brought about the configuration of evolution of the Enlightened One, from birth to the passing away. Thus on the stupa mound, reliefs were made in terracottas, or in stone, showing the queen Maya's conception, the birth of the Bodhisattava, the asceticism of Prince Gautama, the temptations brought by the demon Mara, the Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, and the passing of the Buddha through the Mahaparinirvana.

There were other pictorial representations of the myths and legends of the Buddha's apprenticeship, his travels and the many incidents in his pilgrimage from the stage of the human being destined to become the Enlightened One.

The stupas at Mahasthan, Paharpur and Mainamati approximate to the philosophy of the Buddhist Sangha in eastern India, living among the folk, in full participation of their daily life.

PAHARPUR

The orientation of the Paharpur stupa shows the same relationship of man to the changing universe of the Buddhists as in Mahasthan. Here also the primitivist functional sensation of the space, of the changing universe, of the hamlet on the hill, is transferred by the more self-conscious monks to the harmonious mountain structure constructed to deepen the hold of the pilgrims on the symbolic grave of the prophet of transience

Again, the animist symbols of tree spirits, snake spirits, fauns, hobgoblins are all assimilated in terracotta reliefs and made part of the Buddhist cosmogony.

The fascinating thing, which is noticeable to the people of contemporary civilisation, in places like Paharpur, is the profound sense of awareness of the finite present which must be held within the vision of the worshipper to provide the framework to which he can come from the more static life of the field, to heighten his vision. The adumbration of many forms of the transitory universe in the terracotta reliefs shows that the fixed references of images have multiplied. Obviously, this mound was a later construction.

We do not know whether this mound was also surrounded as in Mahasthan, by many small hill hamlets. The landscape of Paharpur is comparatively bare. The villages are farther away. And from the optical framework of the mound we can see vanishing perspectives on all sides where everything disappears in a mystic haze.

This, the largest stupas south of the Himalayas in Northern Bengal was founded in Paharpur, in the early mediaeval period under the Pala Empire.

According to the account of the Tibetan historian, Taranath, the kings of the Pala dynasty, were active patrons of shrines. Though they were Buddhists by faith, they also encouraged the building of Hindu temples.

Under the reign of Dharampala and Devpala, there flourished two important master craftsmen, Dhiman and Bitapala, mentioned by Taranath in his history.

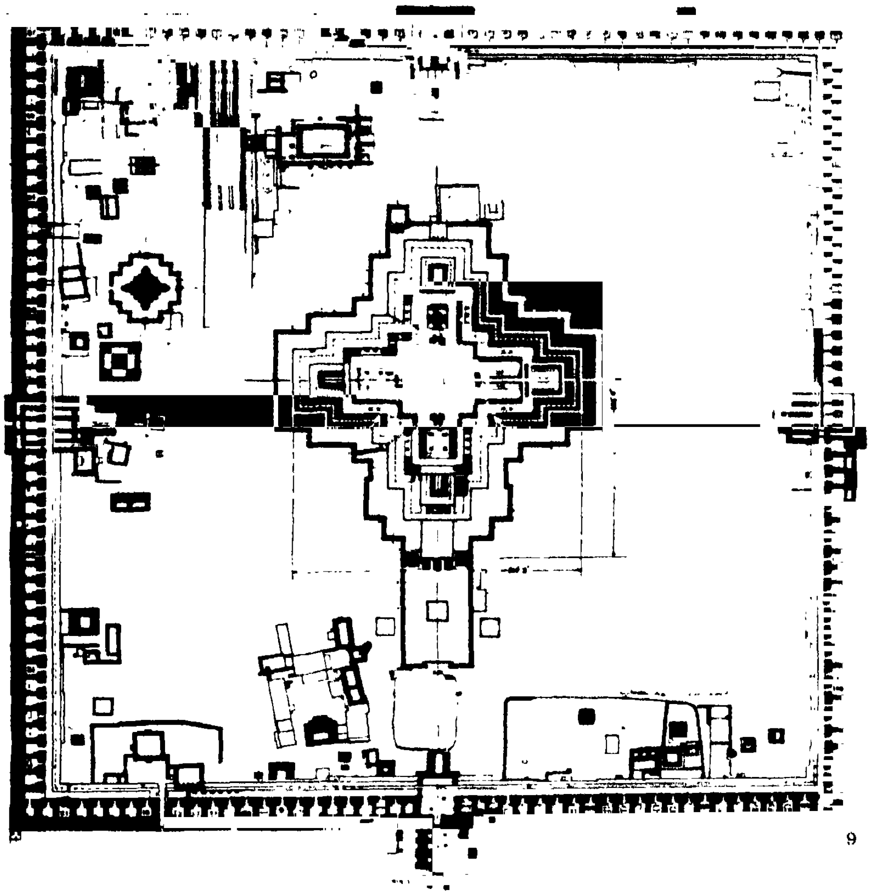
It is likely that the Paharpur stupa was erected during the 9th and 10th centuries. The remains dug up by the archaeologists, during the 19th century, have revealed Viharas or monasteries, with ample rooms, courtyards, platforms, bathing ghats with profuse decorations in terracotta plaques of the most exquisite workmanship.

The diggings have established clearly that there was a stupa mound built here, with the biggest single Vihara monastery so far discovered in the sub-continent, measuring 922 ft. north to south and 919 ft. east to west on the outside.

There were 177 monastic cells, gateways, votive stupas, minor chapels, tanks and other structures, around the dominant central shrine.

8 *Paharpur mound: The monotony of the plain surface of the wall was relieved by insertion of stone bas reliefs on the angles of the projections and in built-in recesses throughout the wall. The construction of the lower terraces suggests that the temple was crowned by a super-structure with elaborate roof. But nothing remains to show exactly what was the construction on top.*

9 *General Plan of the main monastery with temple in the centre.*



The stupa whose height has not been determined dominated the landscape. It was in cruciform shape, with projecting angles between the arms. Three raised terraces, with complex decorative walls, with carved brick cornices and terracotta friezes built up from individual plaques and even stone reliefs, covered the lower walls.

The Somapuri Vihara, as the Paharpur mound was called, seems to have influenced the Salvan Vihara in Mainamati near Comilla, as also the other Buddhist architectural efforts in Burma and Indonesia.

The discovery at Laurya Nandgarh of an early prototype of the Paharpur shrine, shows that the tradition of building the stupa and vihara at Paharpur, came from northern Bihar, though it is likely that earlier stupas and viharas must have been put up in the Ganges planes as at Kosambi and Barhut.

The emphasis on burnt brick and baked terracotta plaques, however, was common to the traditions of the whole area, where the Buddha had wandered. The soft alluvial earth lent itself to the moulding and baking.

The modelling of rectangular brick, and the modelling of forms, were both easily possible in the soft fine earth.

The examination of the layers, from the top of the Paharpur stupa downwards, reveals a simple structural plan. A hollow square on top of the terraces, provided the centre for the entire spectacular movement.

It has been suggested that there was probably here a four-faced chaturmukha Jain temple. And to utilise this original structure, the Buddhists made a projection in the first and second terrace with an ante-chamber and a mandappa on each side, thus leaving out portions of the whole length of the square on the four corners. A circumambulatory passage was made to run parallel with the parapet wall. And this resulted in the cruciform shape, with one projecting angle, between the arms.

There is an enclosing wall round the monument, conforming to the basement plan.

The whole complex seems to have been built in a single period. The repairs, additions and alterations seem not to have altered the original plan in any significant way.

The remains of a seventy foot high wall of burnt brick shows the ambitious monumentality of the construction. The bareness of these walls was relieved on the outer facade by projecting cornices of ornamental bricks, twisted rope design mouldings and pyramidal and lotus patterns.

Paharpur has become a legend of Buddhist architecture, one of the most magnificent monuments of this faith, with an elaborate creative art shaped by the local craftsmen from the very earth of Bangla Desh.

The Mainamati Lalmai hills near Comilla in eastern Bangla Desh beyond the Meghna river were called Samatata in ancient times. Huan Tsang who came here in the 17th century A D , describes Samatata as a low moist country on the seashore.

The political alignments changed in time. Therefore, it is difficult to describe the boundaries of Samatata. But we can see the connection between the modern districts of Comilla and Dacca.

The Ashratpur copper plates found in this area have revealed the names of three Khadga kings. The Khadgas were Buddhists and ruled for about seventy years from the middle of the 7th to the beginning of the 8th century A D These kings were Khadgodyama, his son, Jatakhadga, and the later son, Devakhadga. The last king was the husband of Queen Prabhavati and had a son called Raja Raja. The Khadgas ruled from the capital Jayakarmenta Vasaka, a place which is being identified with a large village of Badkanta, west of Comilla.

The discovery of a large number of stone images of the Buddha, Bodhisattavas, and other Buddhist deities here shows this area to have been an ancient Buddhist pilgrimage

After the Khadgas, a new dynasty called the Devas ruled the area, being contemporary of the early Palas of North Bengal. But we do not know how long the Deva rule lasted.

The next dynasty, which came to power in the beginning of the 10th century, was called Chandras. We know that the Lalmai Mainamati area was the centre of their political, religious and cultural activities. The Chandras were succeeded by the Varmans in the middle of the 11th century who ruled till the Islamic advent at the end of the 12th century A D

The recent finds in the Lalmai Mainamati area are from different points of a ridge. This is a range of low hills in the centre of Comilla district, enclosed by a deep jungle, about five miles to the west of the town of Comilla, and extending from north to south for eleven miles. It is more than a mile broad at most places and fifty feet high. The occasional peaks are much higher.

The Buddhist centres were located on the tops and slopes of these hills. More than fifty important sites have been excavated in the way of stupas, monasteries and shrines. Unfortunately, the vandalism of local contractors led to the loot of bricks from the stupas, sculptured terracotta plaques, bronzes, images, coins and seals. Twenty of the fifty sites have now been protected.

The southern part of the ancient ridge is now called Lalmai, or red clay hill, while the northern part is called Mainamati. The Lalmai area is identical with Rohitagiri, the red hill capital of the Chandra Buddhist kings of the 10th century. Mainamati was probably named after the Queen Mainamati, mother of King Govinda Chandra, whose name occurs in the local folk songs and ballads. Certain copper plates found in Mainamati refer to the donation of kings for the building of monasteries. One of these dug at Mainamati records a grant of land to a Buddhist monastery in the city of Pattkera in 1220 A. D. Ostensibly this city was nearby.

The remains of the Buddhist sites have alone survived and there is no trace of the city.

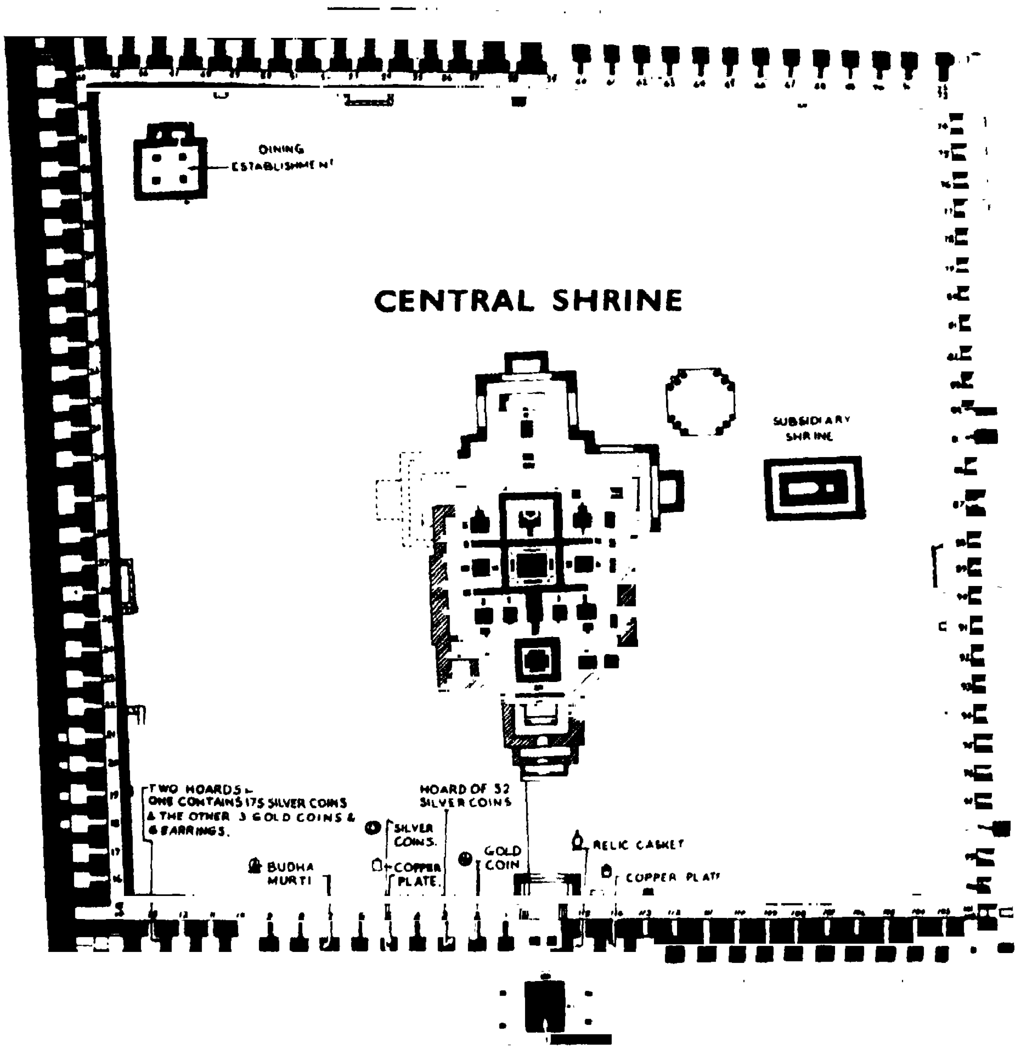
Three sites are important from the point of view of Buddhist architecture of the early mediaeval period. These are (1) Salban Vihara, (2) Kotilamura, (3) Charpatramura.

The Buddhist architecture here found a natural ally in the uprise. Already, elsewhere, the monks had absorbed the small village mounds into their establishments and discovered formal values for the harmonious stupa. Obviously, they had done this, because the Mahasthan and Paharpur landscapes offered cognitive situations, where the genius of the recognition of sites could immediately recognise Buddhist space. Nature offered the model easily enough. The monks could be near the populace and yet far.

In Mainamati also the vertical heights dictated parallels but in a different sense. The sites for the stupas had to be scooped out from the symbolic reference from unknown space. Only, the verticality was there of the Mainamati hill, to enable the men to keep in contact with their inner feelings for detachment from the earth.

One of the reasons why the Buddhists made settlements of their own away from the populated areas was to disengage themselves dramatically from those who were involved in life. Attachment to the world was for them only a temporary connection with world experience. Essentially, they were dedicated to non-connection. The worshippers could come to them as pilgrims to learn of the transient universe and think of the possible Nirvana.

This objective position had obviously suggested the Lalmai Mainamati hill as the ground for measurement of the shrines. The monks must have felt that the expansion of man's consciousness could become almost instinctive if he



10 Plan: Central Shrine of the Salban Vihara Monastery, Mainamati.

received the shock of an unknown space near enough to heaven for the enshrinement of the relics of the Enlightened One.

As one proceeds towards this hill, the outer visual flat world of the fields contracts, the inner life begins to awaken with the ascent. The two dimensions of existence on earth, and possible ascent to Nirvana, become clearly demarcated. Man begins to transcend himself.

The Salvan Vihara was a large monastic establishment. The place derived its name from the forests of tall sal trees near the village of Salbanpur which once covered the foothills as well as the Lalmai Mainamati ridge.

The excavations have disclosed the square plan of a monumental monastery, with 550 feet long sides, containing 115 cells, grouped formally round a central shrine. The solid mass of the edifice is tantalising. The outer wall is 16½ feet thick. After the decay only a height of 4 to 6 feet is visible. The cells are connected by a 8½ feet wide front verandah which runs round the entire monastery. There is only one entrance. There is an impressive doorway in the centre of the north side with 74 feet wide front facade. The 174 feet long brick paved approach road outside is connected by broad steps. There is a spacious entrance hall 33 feet by 23 feet flanked by guard rooms inside. A flight of steps from the hall leads to a vast brick paved inner courtyard.

The size of the monastery cells is 12 feet by 12 feet separated from one another by 5½ feet thick wall. Each cell has a threshold, a wooden door with three corbelled niches in the inner wall. These niches were presumably used to keep votive images, earthen lamps and as shelves for holy books. Brick platforms have been found inside the cells which were perhaps used as hard beds for the monks.

Diggings inside and outside the cell have revealed, according to the archaeologists, four distinct levels and thresholds, from the 8th to 12th centuries A. D. It seems that the original ground plan of the monastery was retained throughout the four centuries, except with minor additions and alterations during the later years. Only 26 of the total plus 151 cells have so far been dug to reveal the original floor level.

Return to the Native Country

Preliminary to Islamic Architecture

The comparatively easy manner in which the Muslim pioneer Ikhtyarud-Din Muhammad bin Bakhtyar Khalji conquered Bihar and Bengal at the beginning of the thirteenth century showed that the Hindu rule under the Sena kings of the 12th century, had lost its popular base in this region by that time through the dissensions of the nobles.

Muhammad Bakhtyar Khalji conquered Bengal in 1204 A.D. He was the first Muslim adventurer, who came to this region, with a new civilisation and culture. But, after coming to Bengal, he ceased to be an alien, because he himself, a Turk, had earlier been uprooted from his homeland in Central Asia and had come to Bengal to begin a new career and to have a new home. Therefore, he attempted to win the people over. With the desire to belong to this region, he tried his mind to the environment of Bengal.

If we look at the Muslim Architecture of Bengal during the period 1300 to 1550 A.D., prior to the advent of the Mughals, we find, alongwith examples of skill, an expression of the intention to belong to the geography of the conquered land. Havell, in his 'Indian Architecture', described the monuments of Gaur and Pandua not as Indo-Islamic, but as Indian. But to term them as linked up generally with architecture in other parts of India, will not be wholly correct, because Muslim Architecture of Bengal is particularly Bengali in style and design, where local traditions, local history, geography and experience, have contributed a great deal to create a specific regional architecture. These traditions formed individual units by themselves. They expressed the aspirations of a group of people faced with the common problems of life.

The architecture of this period then is directly related to the social and economic conditions of the period, and, like poetry, is also an expression of the contemporary society. The monuments of Gaur and Pandua were built in the background of local geography, climate and traditions, absorbing such foreign influences as were received from time to time. During this period, we discover an endeavour on the part of Muslim architects to evolve a stvle peculiar to Bengal.

The available material for house-building in Bengal from times immemorial is the alluvial clay. Black basalt from the Rajmahal Hill in Maldah District was used rarely. Similarly, sandstone and granite were also very seldom imported from Bihar and other parts of India. In Bengal, the brick masonary dominates. Stone always served as secondary material. Therefore, Bengali architecture has always been described as brick-style architecture.

Alongwith the brick-style of buildings, which were generally located in the urban areas, the large majority of dwelling houses were built of bamboo thatched over with dry grass. This bamboo style was the inner style in Bengal. And we find that during the Muslim period, this bamboo style influenced the brick-style in Bengal. The Muslim architecture felt the impact of local influences, which eventually led to the evolution of a distinctive style. The bamboo houses in Bengal have curved roofs and long drawn eaves. The roofs are of two shapes—the *Dochala* shape, or the roofs having two sides, and the *Chauchala* shape or the roofs having four sides. This pattern of roofs influenced the brick-style of the Muslims, so much so that the Mughals also used this form in Delhi Fort and Lahore Fort. Our main contention here is that in Bengal no alien ever had an ascendency. Whenever culture came from outside, it came under the spell of Bengali climate and tradition, and was absorbed in the local setting.

The bamboo-style brick architecture which is evident in the mounments of Gaur and Pandua, is also evident in some of the Hindu temples of this period. Mention may be made of the Dhakeswari temple at Dacca which has *Chauchala* roofs—one chauchala roof alternating with the north Indian segmented roof. In the construction of this temple we notice an amalgamation of north Indian Hindu architecture with the regional architecture of Bengal. In this world where 'faces disintegrate' and 'fear looks out from under the eyelids,' it is significant to note that Bengal continued to preserve its insularity and isolated regional complexion till the advent of the Moghuls.

It was in 1666 A.D., when the whole of Bengal, including Chittagong and its coastal regions, came under the hegemony of the Moghuls. Sir Jadunath Sarkar correctly states that Bengal was first brought out of its insularity by the Moghuls. The renaissance, which we owe to English rule early in the early 19th century, had a precursor, a faint glimmer of dawn, no doubt, two hundred fifty years earlier. These were the fruits of the Moghul Empire. (History of Bengal, Dacca University, Vol.II, pages 188-89). The Moghul authority brought about new chances, with new decorum, sophistication and refinement.

Though changes occurred during the Moghul period in the major cities of Bengal, the villages continued to transmit their ancient inheritance to new generations, and furthered the survival of traditional cultures. The changes in the major cities may be studied as not absolute changes, but as attempts at redesigning the way of life. Creative art and architecture were thus evolved as integral to Bengali consciousness.

Islamic Architecture

Mamluk Style

As the infiltration into Bengal of the Sultanates of Delhi was spasmodic, the architecture of the 13th century is mostly improvised.

The so called Mamluk period evidences to rough and ready construction by using the materials and the main features of the Hindu architecture.

ikhnauti Devkot santosh indaron

These buildings were erected mostly round the town of Lakhnauti, in north-west Bengal (which afterwards came to be known as Gaur in Maldah District), in Devkot near Hilli, and in Mahisantosh in Rajshahi District, as well as Lakhnor (now Nagaur in Birbhum District) and Mandaron in Hooghly District.

Satgaon Chhota Pandua

After the conquest of Tribeni in 1298 A.D., the two Muslim suburban towns of Satgaon and Chhota Pandua were developed.

iargaon Sylhet

In the early 14th century, the Sultanate had pushed to Sonargaon and Sylhet to the east, as well as to Chatgaon in the south. But the building activity continued to be in north and west Bengal.

Garh indaran

Characteristically, a rough fort, called Garh Mandaran, built with ramps and fortification on a rough mound, about 15 ft. to 20 ft. high and covering half a square mile of area, is symbolic of the period of conquest and consolidation.

Tribeni

The Muslims seem to have wished to prevail against the Hindu faith in order to fill their soldier's hearts with fanatical zeal, in the warm, uncomfortable region of Eastern India. Therefore, they set out to annex Tribeni, which stood at the holy junction of the three rivers, the Ganga, the Jamna and the Sarasvati.

Tribeni was also important for military and trade purposes, as the Ganga flowed from the Muslim capital of Lakhnauti downwards. The occupation of Tribeni would connect the conquerors to the sea.

omb of r Khan Ghazi

Hindu-Muslim ynthesis

Although they are in ruins, enough Tribeni monuments have survived in the main structures to show the emergence of a style the buildings reveal a Hindu-Muslim synthesis in the tomb of Zafar Khan Ghazi. The carved Hindu pillars and the exquisite stone reliefs, were adapted by the craftsmen, until they were fused into the structure. The Muslims avoided the zeal of Kutb-ud-Din-Aibak in Mehrauli, who put the pillars upside down in the hurriedly built Qwat-ul-Islam mosque.

M Z G

The tomb of Zafar Khan showed the way towards the more ambitious mosque of Zafar Khan Ghazi at Tribeni. The use of pillar basis in the facade is modelled on Hindu constructions as also the use of brick, in which the stone is used as venear to conceal the brickwork. The monolithic pillars were divided into sections by raised carvings, each section showing different facets. As the Muslims had built mosques in Bengal earlier, they had already familiarised the multi-domed structure already. This mosque has ten domes. There are five front doors and two side ones. The eastern facade has huge hexagonal piers, supporting the five pointed arches. The interior is divided into ten spaces, by stone pillars, on which rests the arches. The domes rest on these arches on corbelled pendentives. There are no courts, no liwans and no ablution pond, as the Bengal climate did not permit open space for the prayer houses. The outside view of the mosque is solid, releasing power through the successive arches.

Sa M

The oblong Satgaon mosque, with six domes, built in carved bricks and three decorative Mehrabs belongs to a later period.

C P M

The Chhota Pandua mosque on the durgah of saint Shah Safiuddin, is a single-domed square building with towers on the four corners and a finial over the dome. Originally built in 1477 A.D., under the Bengali Sultan Yusuf Shah, it was renovated during the Mughal period.

Ba M

The ruins of the Bari Masjid at Chhota Pandua show it to have been a highly impressive structure, measuring 231 ft. by 42 ft., with three aisles, twenty-one doors infront and three on the side. There are sixty-three small domes, built on stone pillars of Hindu design in an ambitious design. It resembles the Fort Mosque of Jaunpur, and is a development beyond the Zafar Khan Ghazi mosque.

B sa

The distinctive feature of these pioneer Islamic buildings, is the Bengalisation of the northern concepts. The pillared halls, the use of bricks and stone, as well as filling the corners with over sailing courses of bricks, to build a circular dome on the square foundation, as well as the use of terracotta plaques for decoration, clearly show the Bengali genius at work. The indigenous ornamentation, the interior arrangement of the pillars to bring light and air, in the humid climate of Bengal, was an innovation beyond the local temple.

Th

The Minar at Chhota Pandua, whether it was for calling the faithful to prayer, or a victory tower, is an impressive monument. Quite different from the Qutb Minar at Delhi, the round tower is on five storeys, each lessening in diameter, from 60 ft. at the base to 15 ft. at the top. There is a beautiful entrance, with a stone door frame with carved pillars on the sides supporting the architrave.

Altogether, the primitivist beginnings meant the use of local craftsmen, nearness to the hearts of the people, and the minimum of vainglory. And a resilient style was evolved.

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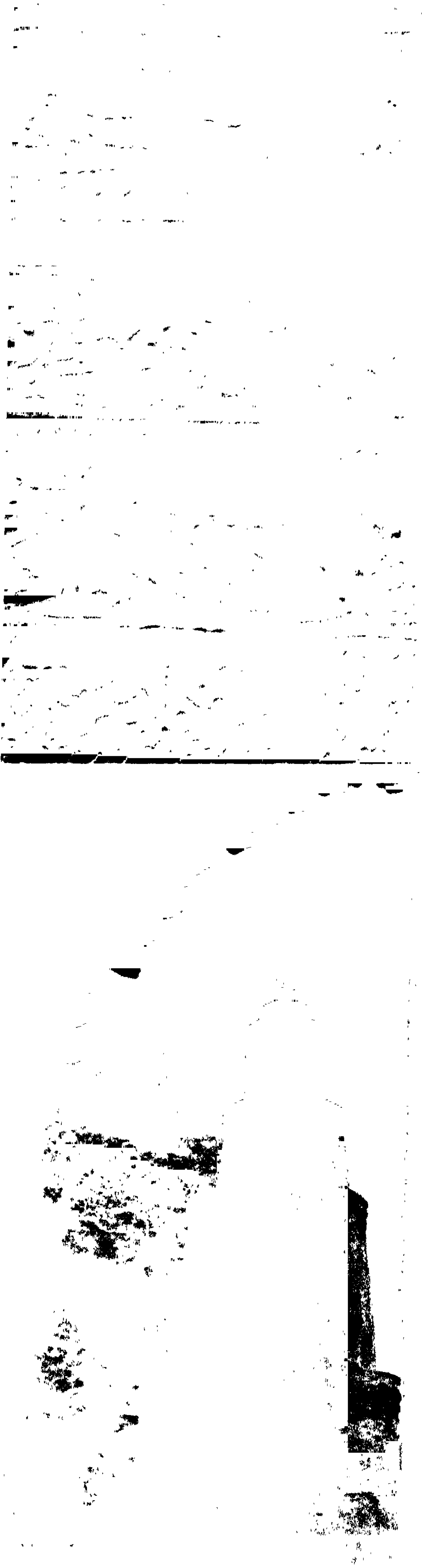

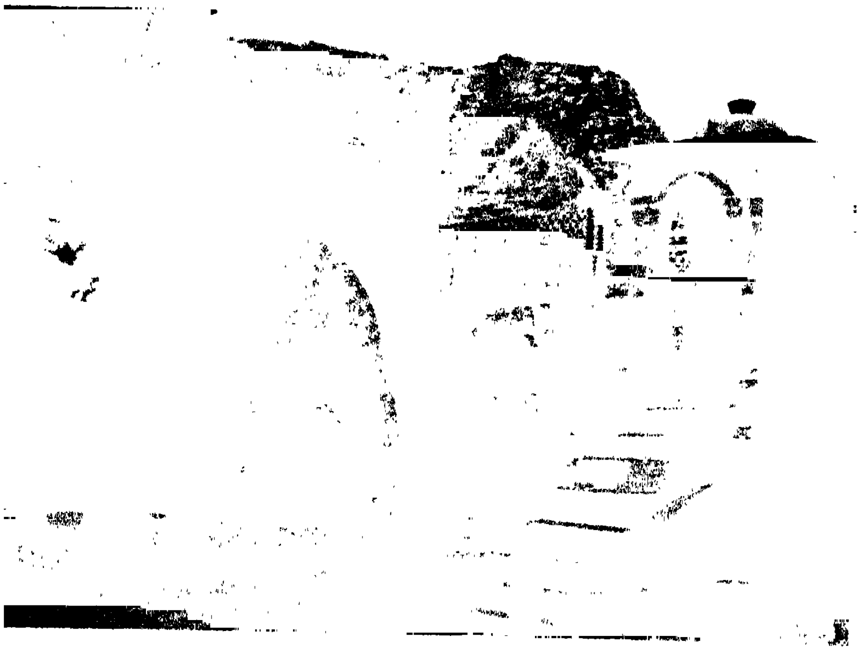

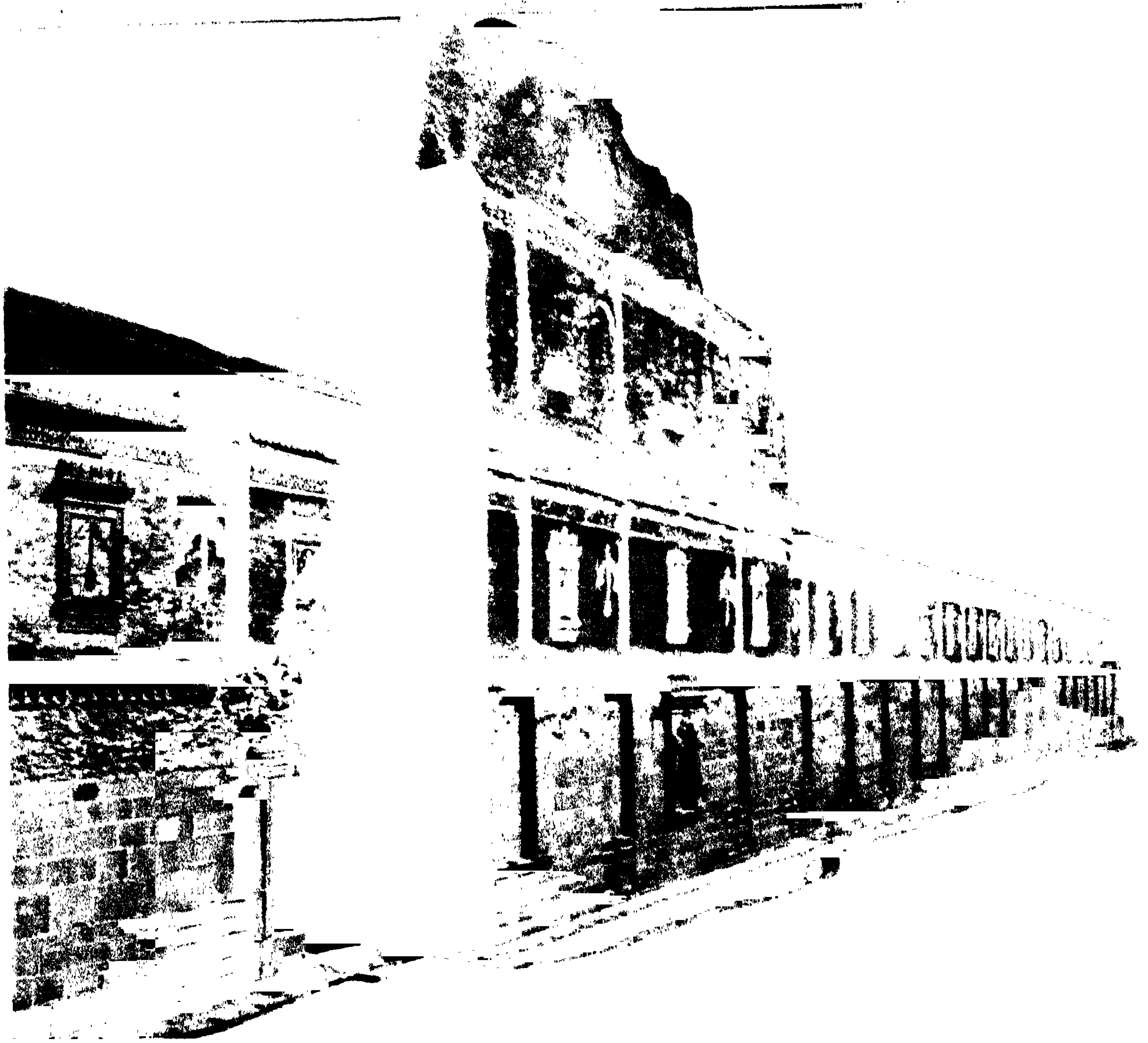

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11 Tribeni: Mosque of Zafar Khan Ghazi, eastern facade (1298).
12 Chhota Pandua: View of the Bari Masjid (1300).
13 Detail of an inscription.
14 Chhota Pandua: Minar (1300).
15 Hazrat Pandua: Adina Mosque, the western facade (1375).
16 Hazrat Pandua: Adina Mosque. View through one of the ruined arches.
17 Hazrat Pandua: Adina Mosque. Detail from the decorated Mihrab.

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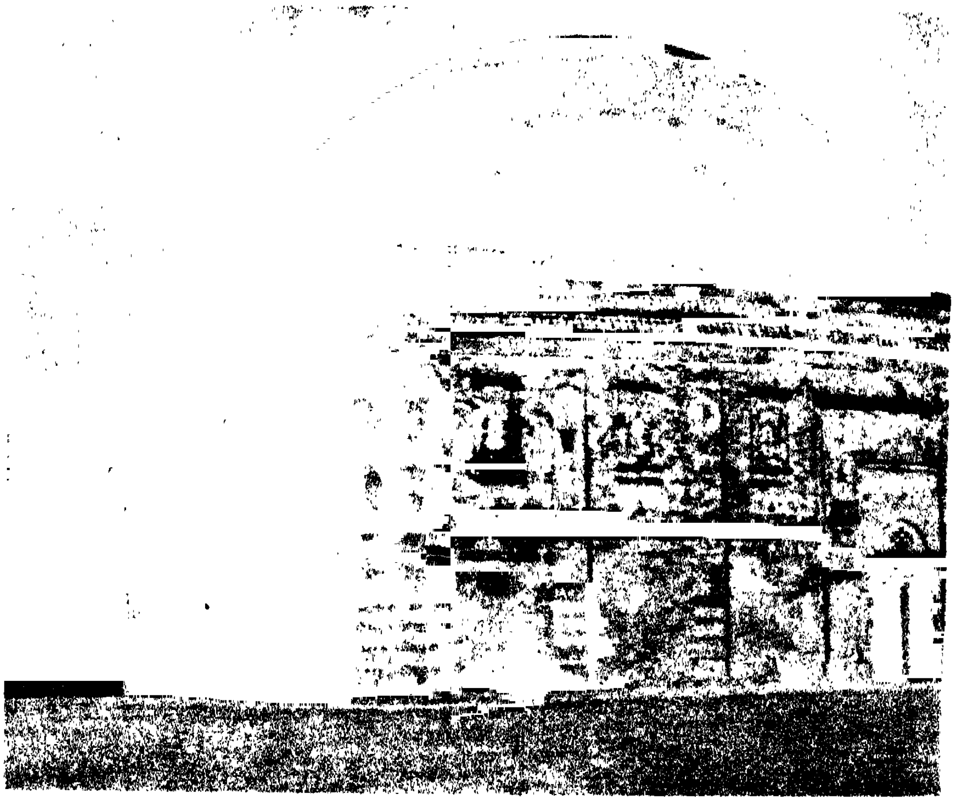

Hazrat Pandua: Pulpit in Adina Mosque.
Hazrat Pandua: Adina Mosque. Interior showing the arches and the massive pillars.
Hazrat Pandua: Eklakhi Mausoleum (early 15th century)

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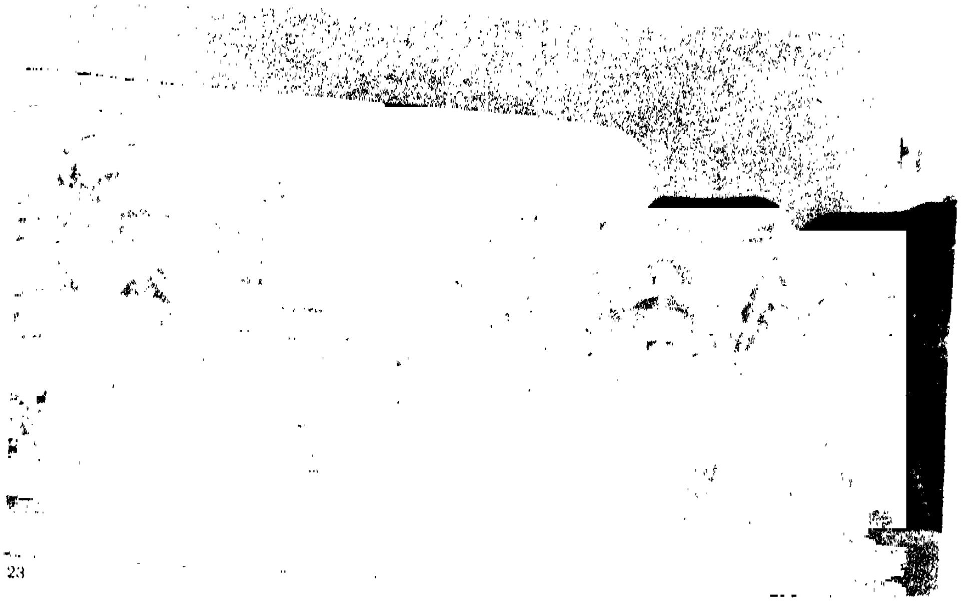

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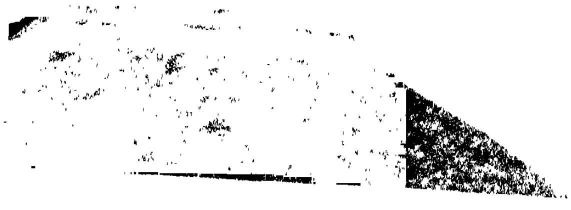
21 *Gaur: Firoza Minar (1490).*
22 *Gaur: Dakhil Darwaza (mid. 15th century).*
23 *Gaur: Tantipura Mosque. Eastern facade (1480).*



Classical Phase of Architecture in Gaur (Lakhnauti)

The capital was shifted from Pandua to Gaur after the death of Jallaluddin. This became necessary because the Ganges river receded from Pandua and made it less accessible and healthy. On the other hand, Gaur, which was built on the mediaeval ruins of Lakhnauti on a deserted channel of the Ganga, was preferred for its ups and downs.

And in this old-new settlement began the 15th century classical phase of Islamic architecture.

Ruins of Gaur

The ruins of Gaur extend along the east bank of the Bhagirathi river for eleven miles. The site of the old Hindu city was by the rampart of eight miles between Phulwari Gate to Kotwali Gate.

The southern end was chosen by the Muhammedans for their buildings to avoid the congestion of the old township. Thus the complex of the Dakhil Darwaza, the Sona, the Tantipara, the Lattan, the Kadam Rasul and Gunmant masjids, as well as the Minar, are all situated at this end.

The important surviving remains of 1435 A. D. and 1490 A. D. period are the *Kotwali Darwaza*, the *Dakhil Darwaza* and *Tantipara mosque*.

The Kotwali Darwaza

The *Kotwali Darwaza*, obviously meant as a police post, is a massive gateway, built completely of brick, with a smooth end surface. The archway was made up by frames of panels, topped by tiers of mouldings. The tapering turrets show Tughlaq influence. Perhaps it got built by Nasiruddin Mahamud I, in the second half of the 14th century when he changed the capital from Pandua to Guar.

The capital of Gaur, begun by Nasiruddin Mahamud I, progressed under his son, Ruknuddin Barbak Shah on the banks of the old Ganges at Kotwali Darwaza end of the city.

Dakhil Darwaza

Among other majestic buildings, the main approach to the citadel, the *Dakhil Darwaza* was built in the north. This is a massive gateway of brick, constructed by the genius of the masons of Bengal in a bold and terse palace design. What the Bengali artists failed to do at Adina Mosque, they achieved in the Dakhil Darwaza, which is a compact giant structure, like a small intimate palace.

The gateway is 73 ft. 4 inches wide and 60 ft. high. Twelve sided tapering turrets project from its corners, five storeys high, crowned by a cupola. The storeys are marked by mouldings, carrying decorations of jali work and blind merlons. The archway is 34 ft. high upto the apex. There are numerous tasteful decorations, the prominent motif being rosettes. The whole construction was a beautifully proportioned building, with projections carried out under a romantic patron.

ntipara Mosque

The achievement of Dakhil Darwaza was heightened, ten years later, by the Tantipara mosque. The name seems to have been given from the weavers, who probably lived in that area. The date ascribed by General Cunningham is 1480 A.D. The builder is said to have been Mirsad Khan.

The old multi-domed oblong mosque plan was revived here with a greater care for proportions. Outside it is 91 ft. by 44 ft. with an octagonal tower at each corner. The facade of the eastern wall is disintegrated by offsets and recesses. The offsets are decorated with large panels. The recesses contain the arched doorway. A line of mouldings goes through the middle of the walls and connects the doorways. The battlements are curved in the Bengali manner.

The inner hall measures 78 ft. by 31 ft. A row of four stone pillars in the middle divides the two aisles. There were ten domes on the roof supported by these pillars.

There are five Mihrabs in the west wall, each enclosed in a rectangular frame, above which are tiers of moulding with blind merlons. There is a splendrous sun higher up.

General Cunningham considered the Tantipara mosque to be 'the finest surviving building in Gaur.' Clearly, there is a charm in the near filigree ornamentation and a finish, which, though feminine, contrasts with the male splendour of the Dakhil Darwaza, built ten years earlier.

Fe M

The Feroza Minar, built by the Abyssian General, who came to the throne after quelling the usurper eunuch Barbak Shah (who had murdered the reigning Sultan Jallaluddin Fateh Shah), gave himself the title Saiffuddin Feroz. And he ordered a mosque, a tower, and a reservoir in the city of Gaur.

Modelled on the Qutb Minar of Delhi, the Feroza Minar is, however, a typical Bengalised architecture. The tower is 84 ft. high and 64 ft. at the base. It is twelve-sided, with the chain and bell motifs on the facade. Each storey is marked off by projecting stone chhajas. Though ambitious in intention, it proved to be a modest provincial structure, which has its own modest integrity.

After the death of Saiffuddin Feroz in 1490 A.D., the court nobles again vied with each other for the throne. Atlast Sayyid Husain, a shrewd Minister was proclaimed King in 1493 A.D.

The Husain Shahi Style

The next style of buildings is called Husain Shahi.

La Mi

The most important of these is the Lattan Masjid, probably named after the favourite dancing girl of the king. The word Lattan means 'tumbler pigeon', but may be derived from Nati, dancing girl.

This mosque consists of a square room, 34 ft. on each side with a corridor 11 ft. wide on the east. It has octagonal towers at the corners. It is 72 ft. long and 51 ft. broad. There are three arched entrances on the eastern wall, with deep vertical panels, alternating between doors. There are niches in the panels of a multi cusped arch springing from the decorated pillars. The battlements and cornice are slightly curved. There are three domes in the verandah and a large central dome. The *Chauchala* roof of the middle dome is striking. On either side of the Mihrab projection in the west wall, there are fluted columns. The east, north and south sides have three doorways each. The dome is supported on stone pilasters and decorative corbelled pendentives. The mosque has been praised by the British critics, Cunningham and Franklin, who saw it in the last century, for its ornamentation, elegance of style and lightness of construction, though Cunningham preferred the Tantipara mosque and the Dakhil Gateway.

The lavishness of the decoration work inside is typical of the Husain Shahi period of prosperity.

am
sul
ue

The Kadam Rasul sacred place so named, because of the foot prints of the prophet, placed inside the building, was built by Sultan Nusrat Shah, son of Husain Shah, in 1531 A.D.

Externally the building is 60 ft. by 39 ft. 6 inches, measuring 19 ft. square inside. The verandah, 15 ft. broad, extends to the north, south and east. The eastern facade is ornamented with three arched openings, resting on heavy though short, octagonal pillars. Lotus rosettes are embossed on the spandrels of the arches. The battlements are slightly curved and so is the triple cornice. There are recessed chases in the vault surface of the north and south sides, varied by mouldings. There is only one arched doorway from these sides. There is a single dome on a central room, crowned with a lotus finial. There is a small carved pedestal of black stone in the centre of the room to receive the footprints of the prophet. The repetition of surface ornaments, from previous buildings, and deliberate decorative effects, show a certain loosening of the old resilience.

ra
na
ue

The Bara Sona Mosque also built under Nusrat Shah, son of Husain Shah in 1526 A.D. is an imposing structure in Cunningham's words 'from its massive solidity and size.' The bareness of the facade, however, shows lack of finish.

The mosque is at the western side of a quadrangular court, which is 200 ft. square, with arched gateways on the north, south and east sides. Inside it measures, 38½ ft. by 13½ ft. The gateway was decorated with floral motifs in glazed tiles of blue, green, yellow, orange and white. From the outside it measures 168 ft. by 76 ft. There are eleven arched doorways on the east. The prayer hall is divided into three aisles, by stone pillars. There is a ladies gallery over six interspaces, over the three northern bays with a flight of steps leading to it. There were thirty-three domes above the prayer hall. The domes on the corridor, in front of the prayer hall, are still standing.

Fergusson rated it as 'the finest memorial now left at Gaur.' Except for its sombreness, it certainly is an highly impressive structure.

Chhota
Sona
Mosque

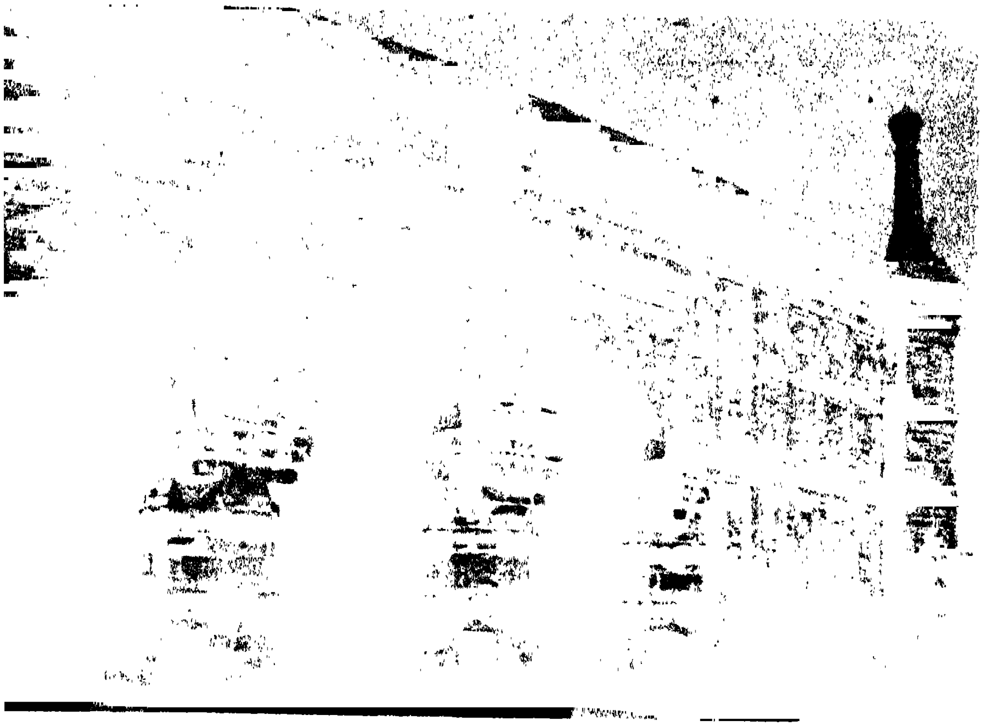
The Chhota Sona mosque so called because of the quantity of gilding used in the ornamentation, was built by Wali Muhammad, son of Ali, in the reign of Allaudin Husain Shah, 1493-1519 A.D., with its ornamental facade, all carved on stone, the five arched doorways above which are embossed rosettes, the first impression is highly spectacular. The oblong building of the mosque is 82 ft. long by 52 ft. broad, with octagonal towers on the four corners. The embellishments, based on terracotta motifs, consisting of panels with chain and bell symbol, mouldings and dabber marks, variegate the entrance. The battlements in the triple cornice are slightly curved. The central dome is of the *Chauchala* type, dramatically constructed to relieve the hemispherical domes on the sides. There are two doorways on each of the north and south sides. The interior is 71 ft. 9 inches by 40 ft. 6 inches divided by stone pillars, into three aisles and five bays. On the north western corner, there is an interspace for the ladies gallery, on the second storey, held on stone pillars by the flight of steps from the north side. There are five mihrabs in the western wall and a small one facing the ladies gallery. The chain and bell motifs reappear again and again.

The almost baroque decoration shows the love of ornate was now dominant.

Bagerhat
Saat Gum
baz
Mosque
Mandkur
Mosque

Perhaps in the regional architecture at Khalifatabad, (modern Bagerhat), there came more resiliance in the tomb of Khan Jehan who died in 1459 A.D. In Saat Gumbaz, Majid kur, Kasba and Sailkupa mosques, the tradition of Gaur was provincialised and integrated into the region.

Mosques were built in almost every district in the mid-mediaeval period, in continuation of the main style of Gaur, until the Moghuls brought their own innovations.



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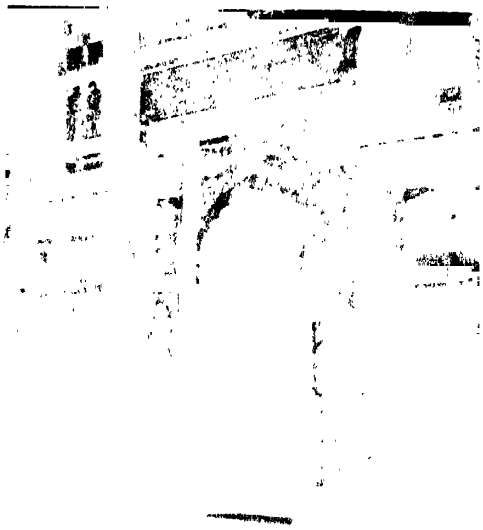

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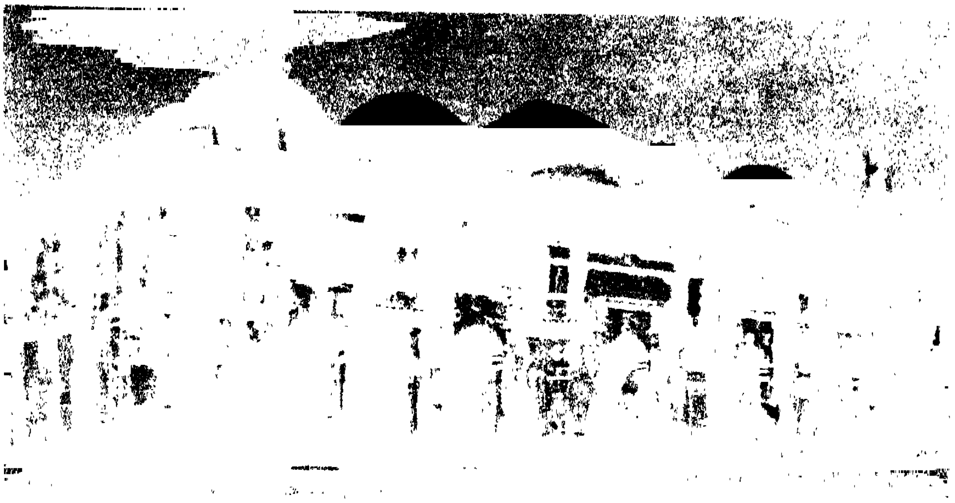
24 Gaur: Qadam Rasul, eastern facade (1531).

25 Gaur: Bara Sona Mosque. (1526)

26 Gaur: Chhota Sona Mosque (1493-1519).

27 Gaur: Chhota Sona Mosque: Detail of the front decoration.



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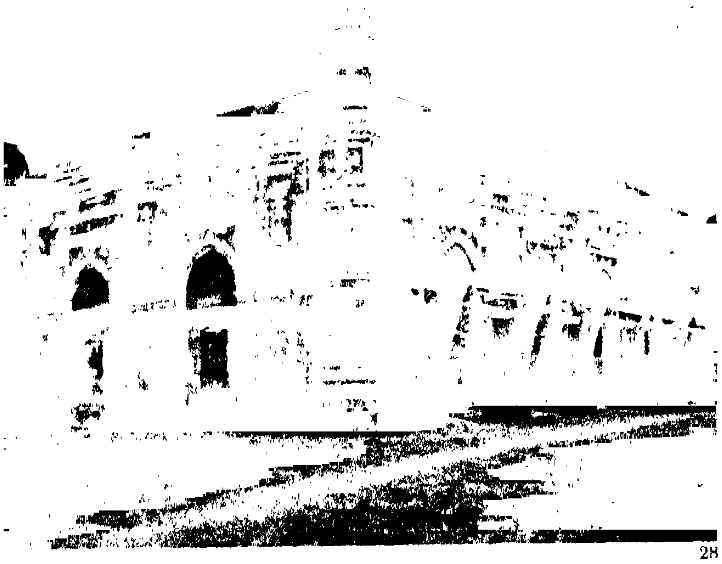

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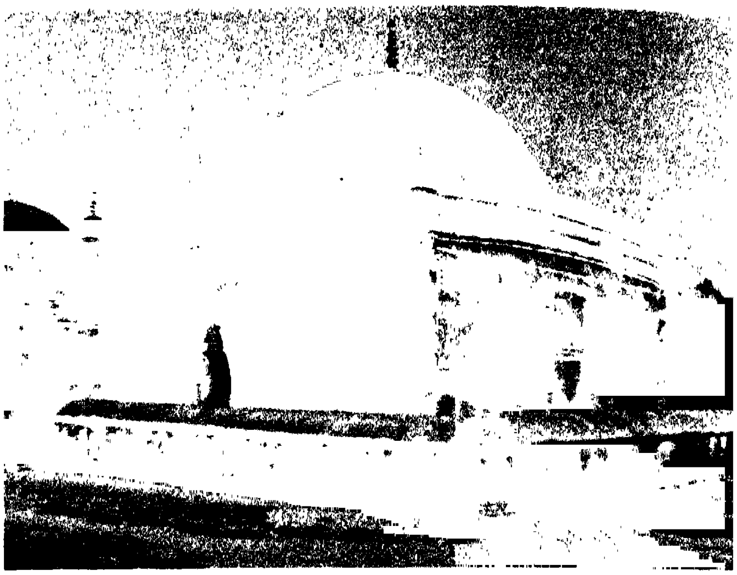

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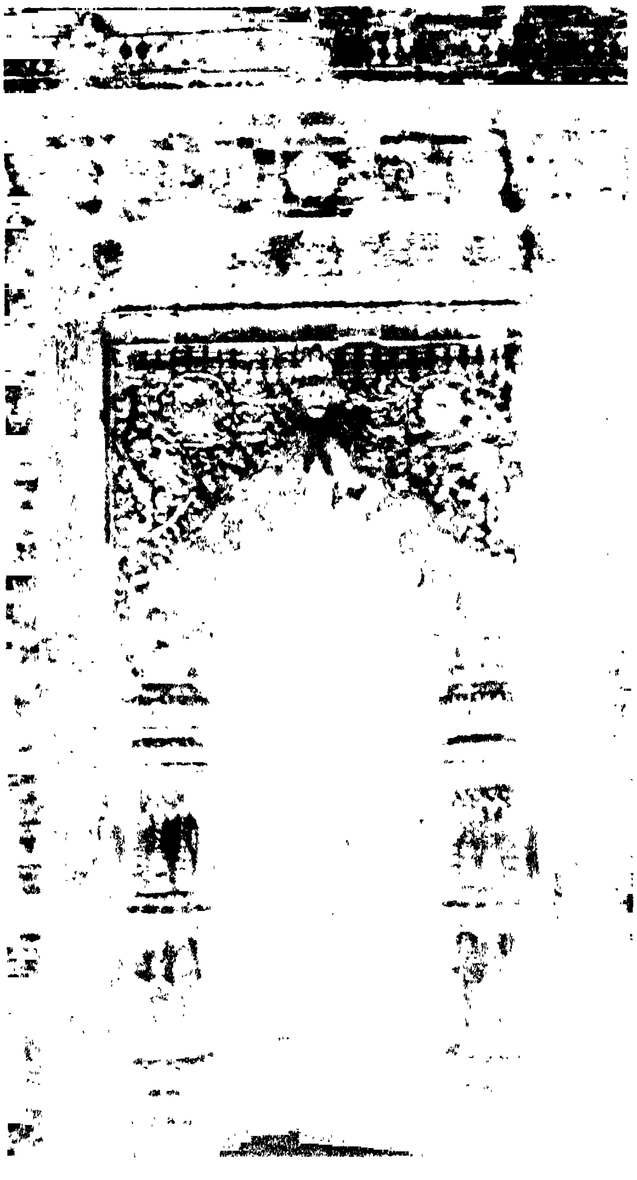
28 Bagerhat: Tomb of Khan Jahan Ali.
29 Bagerhat: Sath Gumbad Mosque (1450).
30 Bagha Mosque (1523).
31 Bagha: Mihrab in the mosque.



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Mughal Style

Establishment of Mughal Rule

The real beginnings of the Mughal Empire in Bengal could not take place under Akbar the Great, because of the indifferent hold of the Emperor's General on this province. It was only eight years after Jehangir became Emperor that a settled civil Government could be established. This has been dated to the July of 1608 A. D. when Dacca was made the provincial capital. The place may have been chosen because it was the heart of the province and provided facilities for river communication and for a century after this event, it remained an important metropolis.

Participation in a big Empire opened new vistas for Bengal and also pacified the small chieftains, making room for cultural developments.

Dacca

The word Dacca is said to be derived from the Dhak tree, or Dhakeshwari, the concealed goddess, to whom a temple was built by Ballal Sen, or to the time when the Dhak or drums, beaten by rebels on the river banks, caused to be audible. These are, however, legends. The actual name given by the Mughal Governor was Jahangirnagar.

The important monuments constructed during the Mughal period are mostly katras and bridges, mosques and tombs.

tegration with local onditions

The distinguishing feature of most of these buildings is not the expensive marble, or stone, used or even the plaster work, which was the distinctive feature of the Mughal style in northern India, but the integration achieved with local conditions especially by the use of brick.

Of course, the sense of glory which the Mughals had evoked in their structures in Agra, Delhi and elsewhere made itself felt also in provincial Bengal also. But the constructions were built under governors and not under the direct initiatives of the Emperors and remained modest.

As the new capital of Bengal the arrangement of the town of Dacca became important. There were built two caravanserais, the *Bara Katra* and the *Chhota Katra.*

The Katra buildings are of similar shapes. And one wing of the building is provided with a second storey for officers.

Bara Katra

The Bara Katra was originally approached from the river, so the frontage from this side is the dominating part of the construction. It was built in 1644 A.D., by Abdul Qasim, the Diwan of Shah Shuja. The prince endowed it to the builder in 1646 A.D.

The Bara Katra encloses a large quadrangle courtyard with living rooms on all the four sides. The Mughal grandiosity was in the big gateways on the north and south. The rooms remained humble.

The gateways were lofty rectangular structures with fronts towards the river. The mass is defined by tall alcoves, rising to the second storey, and decorated with plaster network and other embellishments.

The Chhota Katra was built in 1663, two hundred yards east of the Bara Katra, by Nawab Shaista Khan. It is similar in plan to the Bara Katra, but smaller in size. The grand outlook has been ruined.

The monumental Mughal manner is witnessed in the forts.

As in the other architecture, the Mughals could not build in stone here. Nor could they build the forts in mud as had been done before them. Of the two surviving forts, the Lalbagh, though incomplete suggests the Mughals had option of the local brick.

Situated on the banks of the Buriganga river, not too far away from the Dhakeshwari Temple, it seems to have been a garden before it became a fort.

The construction came to be under Prince Muhammed Azam, Viceroy of Aurangzeb in 1670 A D

There is a long fortification wall on the southern side, with a gateway on the south-east corner. There is a continuation of the wall on the western side. There are remnants of two gateways on the north as well as remains of a city gate on the south western corner. There are octagonal bastions, projecting beyond the wall. Inside, there is earth filling upto the rampart level. Below the filling there is an under ground cell, which perhaps led to the river. There are traces of other features, such as the two storeyed audience hall. The bastions are provided with a wide gun platform, along the river side. The south gate has all the embellishments of a giant Mughal gateway. The lofty archway, on the top of the second storey, is emphasised by octagonal minarettes on either side. Both the flanks have plastered semi-octagonal alcoves, with windows in two stages and cupolas to crown them.

The gateway is a graceful structure with soft lines, pleasant on the eye.

The Hajiganj Fort is situated where the old Bariganga goes into the Lakhia river. Its fortifications include a pentagonal curtain wall, with rounded bastions at the angles, and a small gateway towards the river side. This suggests that it was approached from the river. Presumably, it was built under Governor Islam Khan to keep the river pirates at bay.

There were two other forts, the *Sonekanda* on the other side of the Lakhia river and the Izratpur Fort built on the bank of the river Ichhamati.

The purposive nature of Mughal rule is evidenced by the large number of bridges built under the Governors for military and trade purposes.

Tongi bridge

The Tongi bridge, built under Mir Jumla in 1661 A. D., still survives.

Pagla Pul

The Pagla Pul also built under Mir Jumla, once spaned the Buriganga, which has now shifted its course. It is in ruins, but shows traces of the grand Mughal manner. Built on three open arches, each arch was fore-centred and tilted, with a further blind arch at each end. The arches were decorated with rosettes on the spandrels. The base of the arches was provided with semi-circular cut waters. There were four octagonal hollow towers on each corner. There were multi cusped arch openings to the towers, with deep panels, with fluted domed crowns on their heads.

Qutb Shahi Masjid

The earliest mosques of the Mughal period were patronised by the rebel Mughal officials and officers. For instance, Masum Khan Kabuli built a Jami mosque at Chatamohar in Pabna District in 1582 A. D. This has affiliations with the previous Islamic architecture. There is no departure even in the Qutb Shahi Masjid at Hazrat Pandua, standing midway between the shrine of Nur Qutb Alam and the Eklakhi Mausoleum. This was built by Makhdum Sheik, son of Muhammed Al-Khalidi, a descendant of the Saint Nur Qutb Alam. It is mainly in brick, with roughly cutstone wall faces. Doubtless it was influenced by the Adina Mosque near by, though the profuse decoration of Adina had vanished. The corner towers are crowned with cupolas as before.

Katra Maldah

In the old Maldah township, mentioned in the Akbar Namah, there was built a Katra on the style of caravanserai at Fatehpur Sikri with plain walls about the end of the 16th century.

n Serai

The tower of Nim Serai stands halfway between Gaur and Pandua. Nim means middle.

This is clearly an importation into Bengal, modelled on Akbar's Hiran Minar in Sikri. It may have been put to multi-purpose use as a hunting tower, or alarm tower to warn of invasions, or for females of the seraglio to see tournaments. Approached from the Kalindri, or the Mahananda river, it is a picturesque construction.

A mosque of Akbar's time is the Jami Masjid at old Maldah, still keeping traces of the local Bengal style, built in plastered brick work, with no stone pillars, and with few decorations like the spandrels of the arches.

herua osque

In the township of Sherpur, originally built by Sher Shah Suri, later renamed Salimnagar by Raja Mansingh, who camped here and dispersed the rebels. There is the Kherua Mosque. This was built by Mirza Murad Khan in 1582 A. D. It is a transitional building going on from over-sailing courses of bricks to a western wall, with semi-circular Mihrabs in rectangular frames. The spandrels of the arches are embossed with rosettes and leafy patterns. It departs from the Gaur mosques, with its three square base, each covered with a dome.

Bibi Masjid

The single domed Bibi Masjid, built by Sayyid Ali Mutawalli, during the reign of Shah Jehan in 1628 A. D., adopts the single dome preferred by the Emperor.

Khondkar toka Mosque

This technical improvement in the building of the dome was carried on in the Khondkartoka Mosque, also built in the reign of Shah Jehan by Muazzam Khan, the Governor in 1632 A.D. It had three domes, which have now collapsed. But except for the octagonal towers at the four corners, it resembles the Kherua Masjid. It seems that while in the countryside the local brick style continued, Mughal grandeur began to be felt in the cities. During the transition the important thing, however, was the taking over by even the sophisticated patrons of the *Chauchala* and *Dochala* roofs of the Bengali village hut. This orientation had begun at the Sat Gumbad Mosque of the mid 15th century at Bagerhat, as also at Chhota Sona Masjid and Latan Masjid at Gaur.

There was a parallel in Akbar's tomb at Sikandra, 1612 A. D., and at Itmad-ud-Daula at Agra, 1628 A.D.,of a kind of pyramidal covering over a facade.

But the Bengali village hut model was deliberately adopted over the throne in Diwan-e-Am in Delhi built by Shah Jehan, also at the Naulakha in Lahore Fort built by Shah Jehan in 1633 A. D. Later the 18th century Rajput buildings were to copy it.

The Dochala hut has coverings on two sides, joined on the top to make it a curved ridge, with gable ends. The ridge is crowned with Kalsas, finials. The Dochala was also taken up by Shah Jehan for the house of Jahanara Begum, daughter of Shah Jehan and in the Lahore Fort pavilion in 1645 A. D.

The Bengali curved cornice appears also in Moti Masjid at Delhi and at Begumpura Mosque at Lahore. Many Sikh buildings later on took over the cornice as a wavy curve.

It is likely that the Bengali craftsmen who were imported to northern India may have brought this about. But Shah Jehan's initiatives afforded an important example.

Mausoleum of Fath Khan

The Mausoleum of Fath Khan 1657 A. D., is covered with the Dochala roof.

There is a similar top cover at Sonargaon of about the same time.

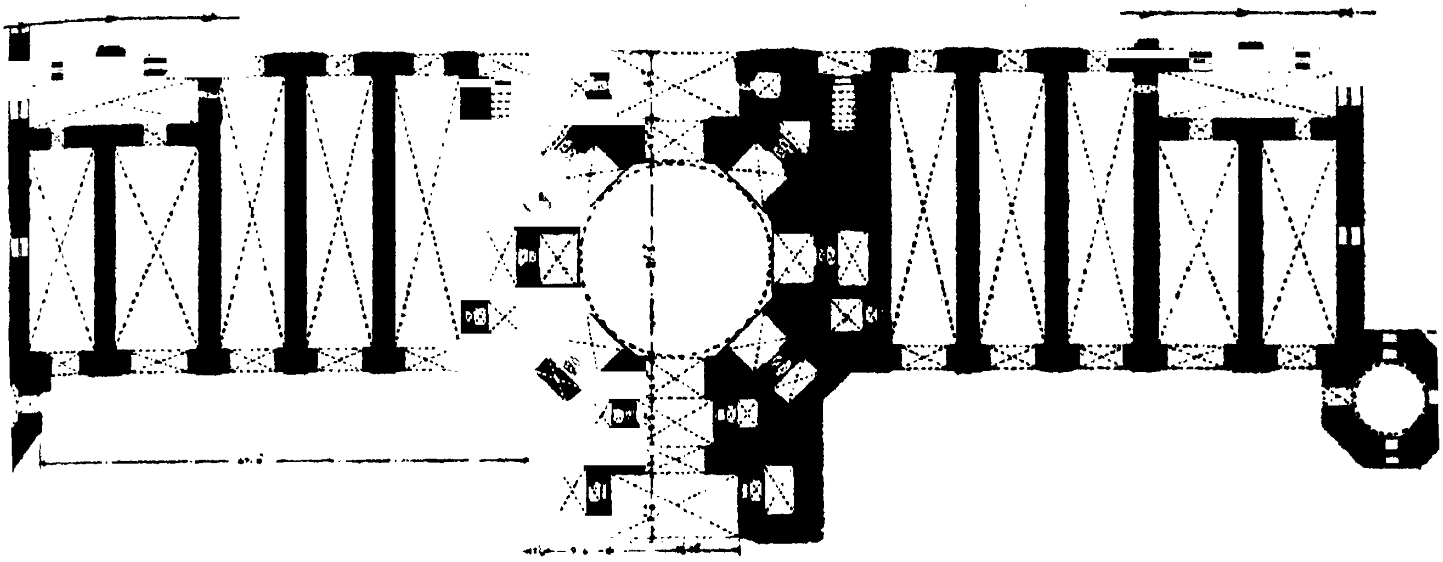
Shah Muhammed's mosque of mid 17th century in Mymensingh district as well as Kartalab Khan's mosque at Dacca of the 18th century A.D., have the same kind of roof.

Hindu Temples with Chauchala roof

Quite a few Hindu temples in Bengal were also built in this style, of the Bengal hut with the Chauchala roof.

Of the later Mughal mosques some of the finest were built in Dacca.

32 Dacca: Bara Katra: the southern wing.
33 Dacca: Lalbagh Fort (1678-79).
34 Dacca: Section elevation of the south gate of Lalbagh Fort.
35 Gaur: Tomb of Fath Khan (1660).



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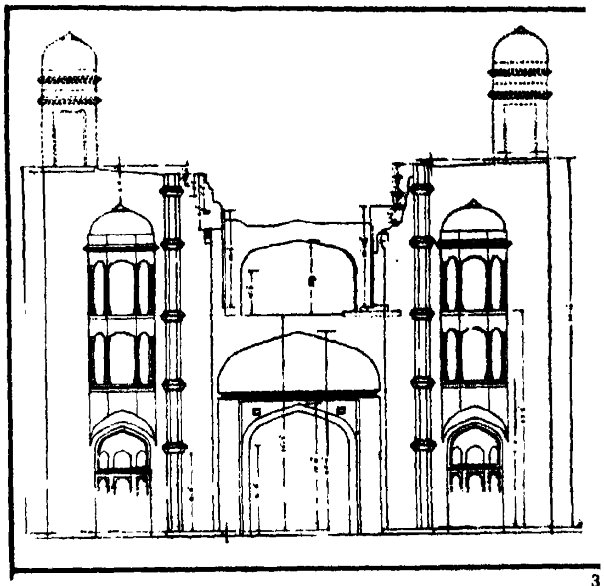

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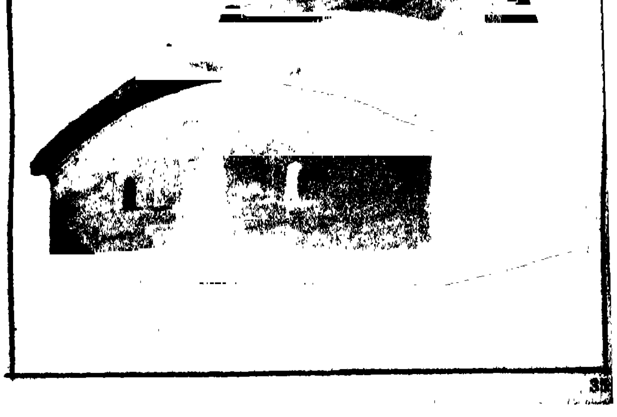

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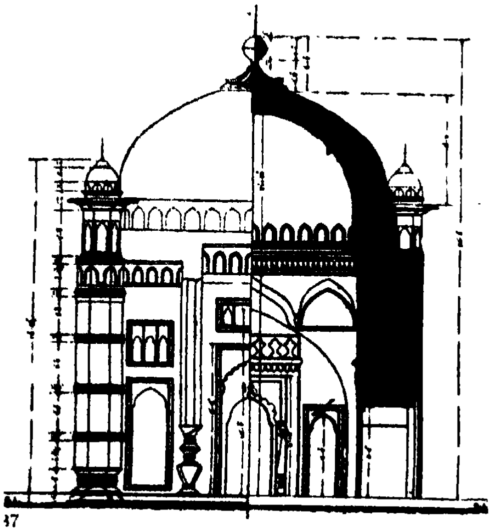
36 Hazrat Pandua: Qutb Shahi Mosque (1582)
37 Altakuri Mosque: Section elevation.
38 Dacca: Mausoleum of Bibi Pari (1684).
39 Dacca: Dhakeshwar: Temple (17th century).
40 Plan: Bibi Mariam's Mosque.



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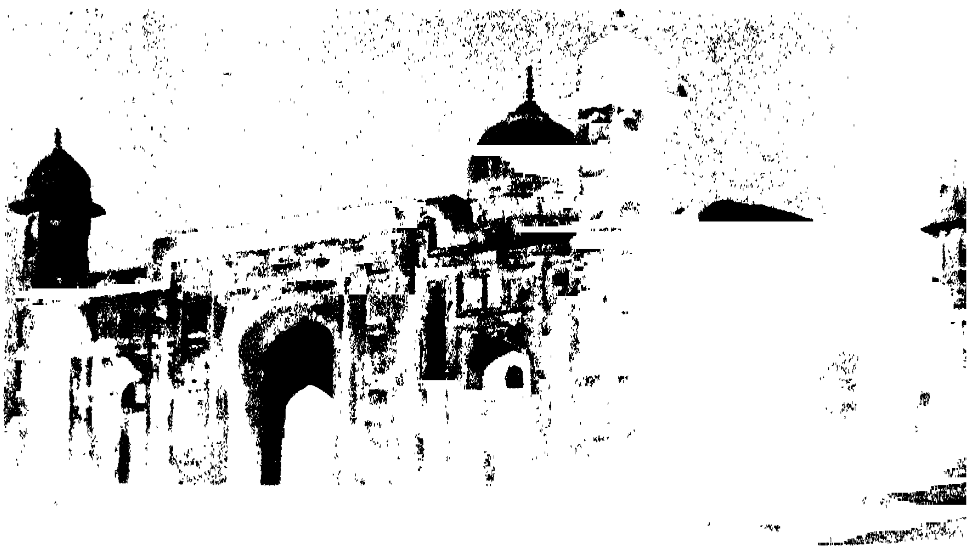

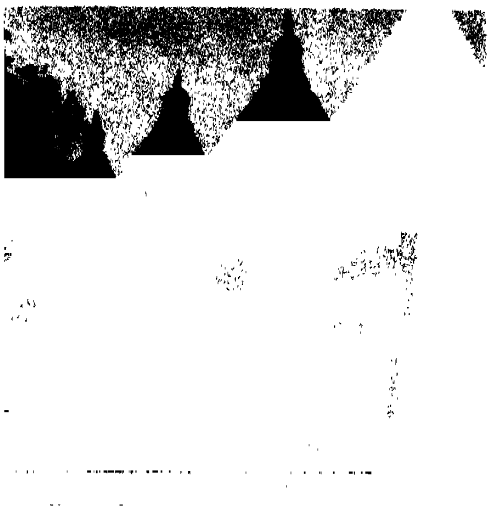

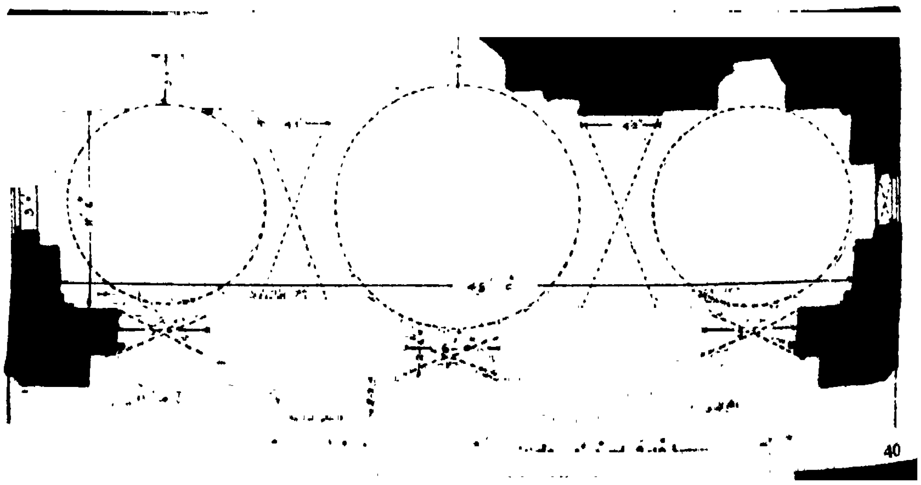

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ihatta sque

First among these is the Churihatta Mosque donated by Muhammed Baig, a Mughal officer in 1649 A.D. when Prince Shah Shuja was viceroy of Bengal. It is rectangular in plan, with towers at four corners. It has three doorways on the Eastern side, each opening through two successive arches. There are many square and rectangular panels on the facade. The straight cornice is faced with blind merlons. There is a vaulted roof on the interior hall with curved intersections modelled on the north Indian pyramidal type.

akuri sque

The Allakuri Mosque in Sat Masjid road, is typical of the Mughal single-domed square type of the late 17th century. The four corner towers and the projected front on the doorways make the interior small dark room only 12½ feet square. The thickness of the wall was supposed to keep the room cool during the hot season. The dome is built on squinches and crowned by a finial.

lbagh sque

The Lalbagh Mosque is a three-domed type of Mughal mosque within the fort of that name near the tomb of Bibi Pari.

Tradition ascribes the construction to the patronage of Prince Muhammad Azam, when he was viceroy here during 1678-79 A.D. The front is an open terrace. The mosque is on a raised platform behind. It is an oblong building measuring 65ft. by 32½ ft., with octagonal corner minars, rising above the parapet wall with their plastered kiosks. The eastern facade is decorated with rectangular panels containing multi-cusped arches. There are three sets in the panels from which there is an entrance into the mosque. The roof is composed of three domes, the central one being bigger than those on the sides. The domes are fluted. They have leaf ornamentation and are crowned with finials. The smaller base of the hall is covered with half domes on the sides. The actual dome springs on a series of pendentives. After this structure the central dome was always emphasised in Mughal buildings.

sque Haji waja Baz

The Mosque of Haji Khwaja Shah Baz is situated between the Ramna race course and the present High Court building. Though it is weathered by time it absorbed all the features of the three-domed Mughal mosque. The inner hall is a graceful place with two arches which divide the hall into three. Decorated Mihrabs and the rectangular alcoves show the work of a refined builder.

Khan ki lasjid

Musa Khan ki Masjid near Dacca hall built at the end of the 18th century was modelled on the Shah Baz mosque.

Saat mbaz sque

Saat Gumbaz Mosque is situated on the edge of a swamp near Muhammedpur colony. The Saat Gumbaz, or the seven domes, are the three big domes, with four hollow corner towers. The mosque is oblong in plan, measuring 58 ft. by 27 ft. There are Mughal style panels on the eastern facade. The central arch entrance is bigger than the side doorways. The chaste interior is graceful and probably owes a good deal to the attention of Nawab Shahista Khan, the Mughal Viceroy in the 17th century.

Bibi riam's sque

Bibi Mariam's Mosque is so called, because one of Shahista Khan's daughters is buried here. The three-domed Mughal style, with battlemented merlons cover a relatively small interior.

Kartalab Khan's Mosque

The Kartalab Khan's Mosque was built in 1774 A.D. The older three-domed features are multiplied into a five-domed structure. There are five entrances separated by standard minarets above the battlemented parapet. There is a Dochala hut room on the north of the mosque which adds a touch of homeliness to an otherwise pretentious structure.

Khan Muhamm Mirdha's Mosque

Another three-domed Mughal mosque is named after Khan Muhammad Mirdha. The platform of this is bigger than the room. The central room is bigger than the side ones. The interior is divided into three bays by two lateral arches, each bay having a decorated Mihrab.

Husaini Dalan

The Husaini Dalan, though not a mosque, was probably built under Shah Shuja. The building stands on a raised platform with wide frontage of four doric columns of brick and plaster supporting the roof of the verandah, which is obviously reconstructed. It had two halls and the whole building has simple space areas, without much Mughal embellishment.

Idgah

The great Idgah, built by Mir Abdul Qasim under Shah Shuja in 1640 A.D. has been reconstructed, but was originally a bare single-walled open mosque of great dimensions.

Dhakesh-wari Temple

The Dhakeshwari Temple with its four tall spired shrines in a row shows the main features of the Mughal style. The spires are of the Chouchala hut roof style, superimposed one above the other in reduced tiers, making a strange kind of Sikhara. A unique departure in Hindu architecture, it follows the mosque plan, though the alignment is different. And there is no Mihrab.

Tomb of Bibi Champa

The grand Mughal tombs of northern India were not copied in Bengal. The structures remained simpler. The tomb of Bibi Champa, the legendary concubine of Shahista Khan is in the Chhota Katra, obscured by new constructions. Its dome stands on squinches, on a battlemented, octagonal drum. There are four doorways, flanked by tapering turrets, placed on inverted jars. The single dome building is 24 ft. square.

Tomb of Hazrat Chisti Bhisti

In the compound of the present high court is the Tomb of Hazrat Chisti Bhisti. This is a square building with fragmented square roof of the north Indian type.

The so-called unknown tomb stands to the north-east of Saat Gumbaz mosque near Muhammedpur, placed on an uprise. It is a perfect square. The walls are thick. The entrance is on the south. The other two sides were closed with stone window grills. On the west is a Mihrab. The rectangular panelling and the multi-cusped arch openings of the facade tend to Mughal magnificence. The roof was flat resting on curved cornice, popularised by Shah Jehan in his buildings in stone. Only here it was in brick and plaster.

Tomb of Haji Khwaja Shah Baz

The tomb of Haji Khwaja Shah Baz stands to the east of the mosque of that name. It was a single-domed square type, but had a vaulted verandah of the Bengal hut roof type to the south. The dome rests on an octagonal ground built on squinches and curved cusped arches in the verandah springing from tapering shafts.

Tomb of Dure Begum

Dure Begum's tomb situated on the edge of a tank by the Saat Masjid road, with a single-domed square hall and a vaulted verandah on the southern side is a poor unostantacious structure. Built before the time of Shaista Khan, it was mainly used as a mosque.

Tomb of Bibi Pari

Tomb of Bibi Pari stands in the middle of Lalbagh Fort. It is ascribed to Nawab Shaista Khan as Bibi Pari was his daughter. The mausoleum is elegant. It stands on a raised platform and has a stone floor. The entrance on the four sides of the tomb was a reservoir with a fountain in the middle, which has been now filled in with earth. The constructed area in the middle of the platform is 60 ft. square. Octangular minarets stand on the four corners kept up by plastered kiosks with ribbed cupolas on the top. The facade and the minarets are divided into rectangular panels, each with a multi-cusped arch. The whole facade is impressive in its simplicity, though the door has a stone archway and the side openings have rectangular stone door jambs and lintels with windows above. The projecting surface has slender fluted turrets. The false copper dome with a tall finial is striking. At one time, the dome was gilded. The interior was divided into nine rooms, the central chamber being 19 ft. 2 inches square, the four corner rooms being 10 ft. 3½ inches square and the passage rooms 24 ft. 8½ inches by 10 ft. 8½ inches. This intricate plan was derived from the Mughal structures of Agra and Delhi.

The entrance to the tomb chamber is from the southern side only where there is a stone door jamb and door leaf of sandalwood. The other doors have marble screens. The ceiling of the rooms is of overlapping black basalt stone. The elaborate plan is influenced by the Hindu style of room construction. It is a magnificent achievement.

Tom Bibi Mari

Bibi Mariam's Tomb is near the mosque of that name is in a poor state of preservation. It has a central square room carved by a tall dome.

There are other graves besides the big masonary senotaf of Bibi Mariam.

Regional Religious Architecture in Bengal

A Study in the Sources of Origin and Character

(1)

Earlier writers who have noted and discussed the changes in the formal features sharply distinguish the religious structures of both the Hindus and the Muslims which were built from the 15th century as distinct from those built earlier. From the 15th century there developed, under the patronage of the independent Sultans of Bengal and their officers, a type of modest, unpretentious mosque composed of a closed-in, or covered hall, with low facades, surmounted by an unassuming superstructure. Standing on an open grassy court, these mosques are isolated structures and incapable of representing the power and grandeur of the royal court.

Much more interesting is their resemblance with the low thatched huts, the popularly used folk architecture of Bengal. The low facades of the religious buildings of the Muslims are bent at the top and look like the visible portion of the walls of the huts, below the projecting *chhaja* (eave) of the drooping thatched roof. Sometimes the form of the *chala* roof was also used in the superstructure. These features constitute a form which is marked by a major shift from the orthodox form of the preceding century as represented by the elaborately designed enormous structure of the Adina mosque at Hazarat Pandua (Maldah, West Bengal). Developed and practised in Bengal only, these features also account for the regional character of the form.

Similar features also characterize the types of temples, which were invented in the Gangetic plains of Bengal from the 15th century. These are also isolated structures of modest dimensions with marked resemblances to the folk *chala* architecture. The substructure of these temples resemble the visible portion of the walls of the huts below the *chhaja*. The superstructure of most of the temples was designed directly after the form of the chala roof. The other important type is composed of a low *chala* substructure, surmounted by one or more pinnacles representing the form of the *sikhara* type, the antiquated traditional north Indian type of temple, which was practised in Bengal from the early Pala period, or even earlier, and was continued to be built in the peripheral tracts of the south-western parts of Bengal when the new forms were being evolved in the *Gangetic* plains. Chronologically, the *chala* forms of the temple and the temples which combine the *chala* features with the traditional *sikhara* form, appeared after the regional religious buildings were developed into what has been described by Percy Brown as a 'complete regional style.'

The emergence of the regional style is a common and well-known phenomenon in the field of the art and architecture in India. We know that several regional versions of the *nagara sikhara* were developed in the different parts of India. Several regional styles of the religious architecture of the Muslims had also developed in India. But never before had the features of the fragile huts, which is used by the masses of the people, been adopted so extensively and allowed to dominate the character of the form. The temples were mostly built by the Sultans or their officers. It is curious that they had chosen the architectural form of the lower stratum of their subjects for their own religious buildings. Even in the case of the temples, the adoption of the *chala* features is a no less curious phenomenon. The antiquated traditional *sikhara* type was known in Bengal and was being built at least in one part, the south-western part of Bengal. Yet the *chala* form was adopted for designing the temples.

Aesthetically, the religious buildings of the Muslims and the Hindus constitute impressive styles. However, historically these are the most significant series of buildings which bear out a sort of continuity between the culture of the court and that of the village on the one hand and between the tastes and preferences of the Muslims and those of the Hindus on the other. It is, therefore, necessary to know the historical reasons, which led to the emergence of these regional forms and the different dimensions of these architectural movements.

(2)

The period of study begins with the first quarter of the 15th century, when the earliest available building of the religious architecture of the Muslims e.g., the Eklakhi mausoleum at Hazarat Pandua was built (Mukhopadhyaya 1962 : 62 and 75).

The earliest known regional temple was built nearly five decades later. This is the temple of Sinhabahini in the Konnagar locality of the Ghatal town (Midnapore, W.B.) which, according to the inscription affixed on the front wall, was built in the year A.D. 1480.

With the fall of the independent Sultanate of Bengal, the regional religious architecture of the Muslims had lost its most important patrons.

Yet, the regional style was continued till the end of the 17th century.

The regional temples of the Hindus had come into being as a matter of popular preference. These were practised till the 20th century when temple building ceased to be a significant social phenomenon.

(3)

In A.D. 1352 Ilyas Shah succeeded in unifying almost the whole of Bengal into one single political unit and founded an independent Sultanate for the administration of unified Bengal. His successors preserved the unity and the independence of Bengal for more than a century and a half. The unification of Bengal was much more than what it politically meant at that time. This political unity had been the aim of the powerful monarchs of Bengal since the days of the early Palas in the middle of the 8th century. It had also been the inevitably logical, political consequence of the development of the common cultural traits of the people of Bengal and their regional identification that had been asserting itself with increasing prominence even before the foundation of the Pala dynasty (Ray, 1949:459-60, 494-97, 789-98 & 824). Ambitious and enterprising kings such as Sasanka, the Palas and the Senas, made attempts to build up a single political unit in Bengal. But the success achieved by them was either short-lived or limited, or both. Whenever the central authority had shown signs of weakness, parochial local forces came forward to assert themselves and the unity was disrupted or the external invaders had occupied the different parts of Bengal, (Ray, 1949: 455-516). By unifying Bengal permanently within definite limits, and by establishing a stable central authority, the independent Sultans gave a concrete political and geographical shape to the regional identification of the people of Bengal and to their urge for unification.

The independent Sultanate of Bengal was established by defying the imperial authority of the Sultans of Delhi. Firuz Shah Tughlaq personally led two successive campaigns to re-establish the hegemony of Delhi. Apart from this initial threat to its independence, Bengal was practically surrounded by the hostile powers of Jaunpur on the west, Orissa on the south-west and Kamrup on the north-east. Internally, inspite of the establishment of the central authority, the local chieftains and potentates held political and social power at their levels, although the strongly founded Sultanate compelled them to remain confined within their own limits.

Under these circumstances, it appears logical to postulate that the Sultans had to fall back upon the people, and their popular leaders. The Sultans tried to identify their administration with the life and culture of the people, by using the dominant regional identification of the people of Bengal. They had also built up efficient media of communication with the people, by trying to effect a synthesis between the traits of indigenous culture and the one brought into Bengal by the Muslims. Political exclusiveness, within well-defined territorial limits, coupled with self-sufficient agricultural economy, effectively separated the Bengalis from the rest of India. Bounded within their own limits, the Bengalis now turned towards their own environment and attempts were made to develop the authocthonous traits and elements into a distinct regional culture. At this stage, the Sultans started making efforts to effect a synthesis between the indigenous culture and the culture that the Muslims had brought from West Asia. The combination of these factors in the life of the Bengalis, during the regime of the independent Sultans, created the most favourable circumstance for the consolidation of the regional culture of Bengal through synthesis and acculturation.

Apart from the efforts made by the Sultans, the isolation of Bengal from the rest of India led the Muslims in Bengal to move closer to the indigenous culture and to think in terms of a cultural synthesis. Bengal did not contain any notable centre of Islamic religion and culture. On the other hand, political isolation separated Bengal from the main centres of Islamic culture. Consequently, the Muslims in Bengal were compelled to establish closer contact with the indigenous culture and could not help being profoundly influenced by the indigenous traits and the powerful trend of the regional identity of the Bengalis. This explains the modified form of Islamic religion and culture in Bengal during the regime of the Sultans, which has been described as 'a sort of folk Islam having hardly any connection with the dogmas of religion'. (Tarafdar, 1966:164).

This is what we can premise according to logical postulates. An empirical case study, which will bear out these premises is a study of influences at work in the religious architecture in the post-Ilyas Shahi period. One of the most eloquent testimonies of the Sultans' policies and the attitude of the Muslims is furnished by the mosques, mausoleums and other religious buildings of the Muslims built during the 15th and the first half of the 16th centuries. Most of these buildings were constructed under the patronage of the Sultans themselves or their officers. Aesthetically speaking, these mosques and mausoleums do not constitute an impressive style of architecture. But their real importance lies in the fact that they represent a complete regional style of Islamic architecture, which is marked by some major changes from the past. The days of grandiose architecture of the Adina mosque (A. D. 1375), symbolic of excessive ambition and self-exaltation (Fig. 1) were gone. More realistically aware of their own position, and the necessity of compromise as well as identification with the indigenous culture, the Sultans proceeded to produce much more moderate and simplified structures to suit the local conditions and taste.

The singularity and uniqueness of the features of the regional Muslim architecture of Bengal is better demonstrated by the mosques than by any other class of building. Unlike the mosques built under royal patronage in other parts of India, the regional mosques of Bengal are modest, unpretentious structures, rising to a moderate height. Some of the essential features of a typical mosque, such as the enclosed compound, imposing gateways, the *minars*, cloisters, and *maqsura* screen (Fig. 2) were dispensed with. The closed in, or covered room was adopted to cope with the heavy and long-lasting rainy season. Thus, the regional mosque of Bengal is a simple isolated structure of modest appearance, standing on an open piece of land. Its exterior consists of low facades, carrying carved cornices above, and accommodating a range of pointed arched openings below, usually three or four in number. At each corner a turret projects, usually octagonal in section terminating in a pinnacle. In keeping with the low facade, the dome that surmounts the entire composition is also built low. It stands directly on the roof without a neck. (Figs. 3 & 4).

This description of the regional mosques of Bengal although sketchy, shows that there is nothing in these structures that may be taken to be an attempt to represent the strength and dynamism of Islam, or the power and authority of the State. Pecuniary stringency, or the limitations of the only permanent building material available in the terraqueous country of Bengal (Bandopadhyaya, 1971: 14) or the extremely humid climate of Bengal, do not seem to explain the development of this form. Both Brown and Dani think that the two main factors responsible for the development of the regional form of religious architecture of the Muslims are the influences of the soil on one hand and the climate on the other. Brown is perfectly right in saying that the influence of ecology determined the form of the fragile huts of transient type used by the Bengalis, which, in its turn, was the source from which the characteristic traits of the regional religious buildings of the Muslims were derived(Brown, 1942: 36-37). But he does not seem to clearly explain why the characteristics of the fragile hut were adopted by the Muslims in their religious buildings built in permanent materials although they had a great tradition of well developed religious architecture, and there was no precedence of adoption of the features of the *chala* huts in permanent buildings. While approving of all that Brown says, Dani has carried the point of influence of rainfall much further by saying that some of the essential elements of the conventional mosque were discarded in Bengal because of the heavy rainfall (Dani, 1961 : 21-22, 80-81). He, however, does not explain why and how the heavy rainfall in Bengal discouraged the construction of elaborate complexes or high buildings.

With the help of the arcuated methods that the Muslims had introduced in Bengal, such as the dome, vault and true arch, and use of concrete mortar for brick laying, it was not difficult to build elaborate and imposing structures. In fact, such structures were built in brick in Persia by the Muslims; and long before the Muslims had arrived in Bengal brick structures of immense proportions were built in Bengal, as is evident in the ruins of the temples of Paharpur, Mahasthan and Mainamati. Again, very durable buildings were built in brick in Bengal some of which such as the temples at Sat Deuliya (Burdwan), Sonatapal, (Bankura), Paschim Jata (24-Parganas) Deulghat and Para (Purulia), have come down to us from the 10th to the 13th century. The source of inspiration of the regional style of mosque seems to lie in the inherent nature of the regional culture of the Bengalis. An essentially and predominantly agrarian people, restricted within their own immediate environment, the people of Bengal had a very limited opportunity to accrue material prosperity and experience of life and the world. This was truer of the later Pala period than of the period when the Paharpur temple was built in the second half of the 8th century. The culture of the people of Bengal during the regime of the early Palas was more broad-based in its territorial extent and in the communication media made possible by trade and commerce. However, in the later periods, the political and economic condition led to increasing isolation and this must have affected the imagination of the people. This explains the lack of boldness of conception, and breadth of imagination in what they had created. Perhaps this is why there is no evidence of any ambitious architectural project in Bengal from the 9th century, (Ray, 1949: 824). The extant examples and ruins indicate that single-chambered modest structures, sometimes preceded by a pillared hall, were preferred by the people of Bengal, rather than an elaborate complex built on a grand scale as in the other parts of India. The Sultans tended to conform to this tradition, while building their mosques and other religious structures.

Another important feature of the regional Muslim architecture of Bengal consists in its resemblance with the thatched folk architecture of Bengal known as *chala* both in plan and elevation. Usually the plan of a *chala* consists of a square or oblong room preceded by an oblong porch in front which in some cases is continued along the flanks of the room and even the rear (Figs. 5 a—f). The majority of the

Fig. 1: Plan, Adina mosque (1375), Hazrat Pandua (Maldah, W.B.). Believed to have been designed after the Great Mosque at Damascus built by Al-Walid (705-715), it measures externally 507′ by 285′ and encloses a rectangular court which is 400′ by 150′. Around the court runs a continuous screen of arches. The western wing is divided into two halves by the central nave which was surmounted by a barrel vault. The rest of the structure has been divided into bays by stone pillars which support the domes, 306 in number. It is the largest and the most elaborate congregational mosque of Bengal and the most important specimen of the orthodox form of mosque in Bengal (copied from A.D. Dani's *Muslim Architecture in Bengal*).

Fig. 2: Components of a typical Indian Mosque (copied from Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture* (*Islamic Period*).)

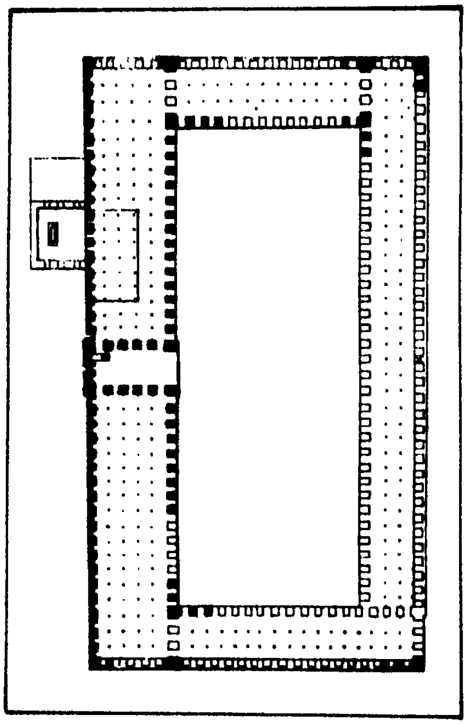
Fig. 3: Mosque (c. 1450), Masjidkur (Khulna, Bangla Desh). An example of the regional religious architecture of the Muslims. The substructure shows *chala* features in the curved top of the wall and in the slightly projecting cave which represents the projecting *chhaja* of the *chala* roof. The set of three entrance openings with the central one larger than the rest is a West Asian architectural design which may be seen in the Bab al Amma, the Jausaqal-Khaqam, Samarra. This design which may be found to occur in a number of regional religious buildings of the Muslims (Figs. 3 & 12) was almost universally adopted in the porched temples (Figs. 25, 28, 29, 31, and 33-35).

Fig. 4: Chhota Sona masjid, (between 1443-1519), Gaur (Rajshahi, B.D.). An example of the typical closed-in mosque of Bengal it shows the features of the *chala* hut in the slightly curved top of the wall and the curved cornice composed of a series of mouldings which represent the thickness of the *chhaja* of the huts. *Charchala* appears in the superstructure where it replaces the domes in the central part (Fig. 6). The *charchala* of this mosque has been designed after the low *charchala* form (Fig. 10a). It is a representative example of the *charchala* form used in the Muslim religious architecture. (Based on a reproduction in Dani, *op.cit.*).

Fig. 5: Plans of the huts of Bengal.

- (a) Square room
- (b) Oblong room (usually used for *dochala* construction)
- (c) Single porched room
- (d) Double porched room
- (e) Three porched room
- (f) Four porched room

Fig. 6: Plan, Chhota Sona mosque (between 1493 and 1519) Gaur (Rajshahi, B.D.). An example of the plan of the typical closed-in mosque of Bengal. It shows the use of cove vault for roofing the central part which has been externally covered by *charchala* forms (Fig. 4). Similar use of cove vault and *charchala* in the central part may also be noticed in the multi-domed *Shat Cambuj* mosque at Bagerhat (Khulna, B.D.), (Copied from Dani, *op.cit.*).



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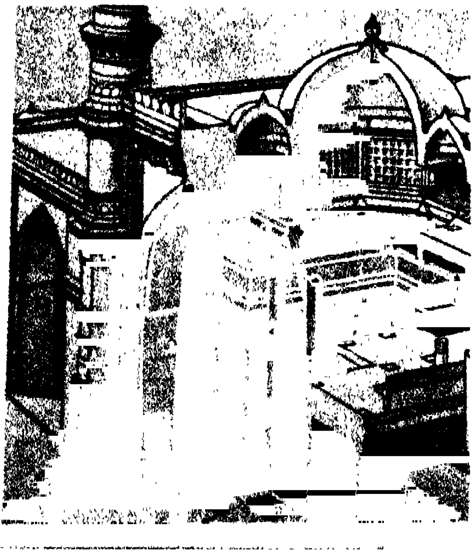

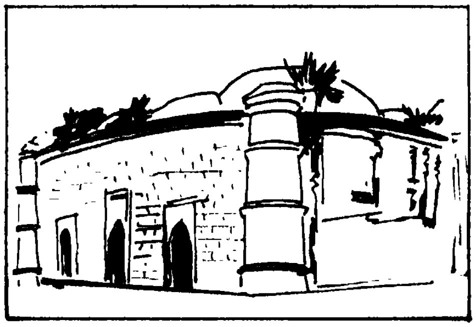

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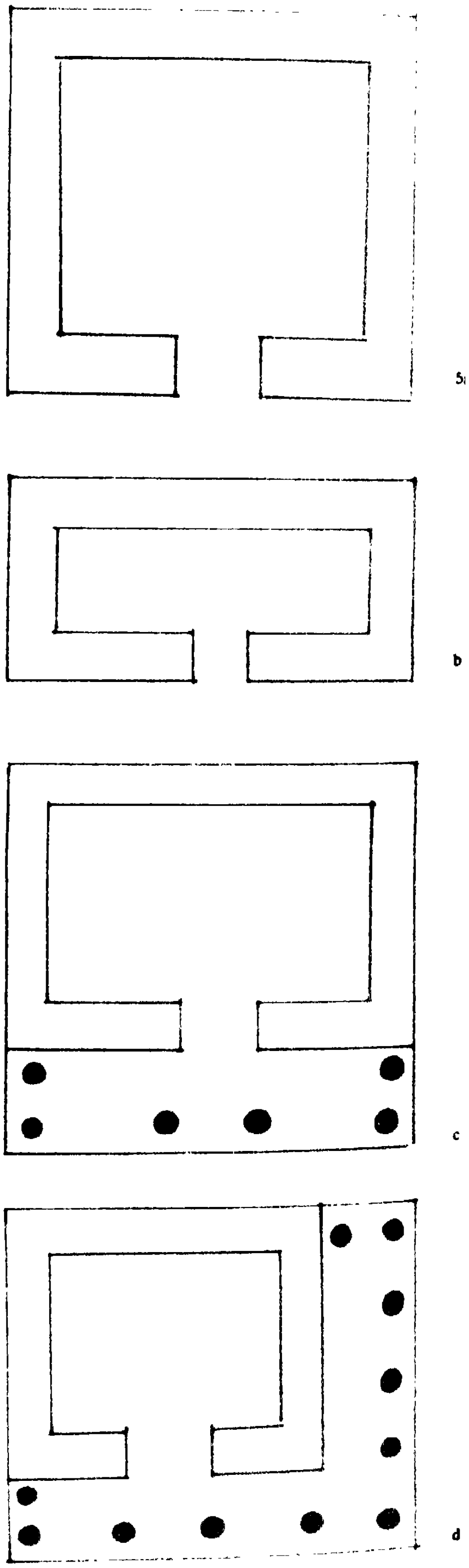

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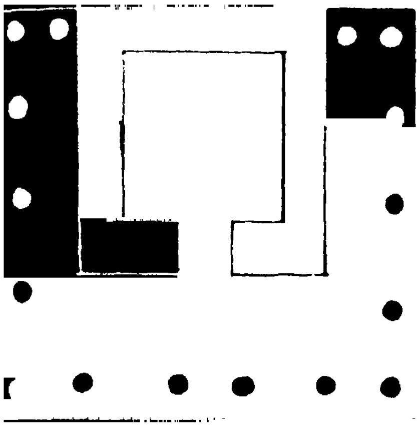
Fig. 7: Plan, Masjidbari mosque (1465), (Barisal, B.D.). A typical example of the plan of a regional mosque of Bengal it is basically designed after the single-porched variety of the plan of the Bengali huts (Fig. 5c). At the same time it incorporates such West Asian features as the set of triple entrances and the corner turrets (copied from Dani *op.cit.*).

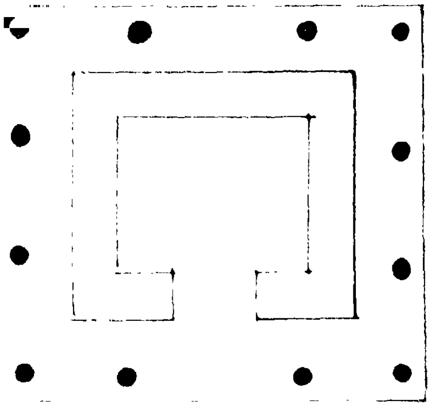
Fig. 8: Plan, Latan mosque (1475), Gaur (Maldah, W.B.) A modified version of the plan of the Masjidbari mosque (Fig. 7). In addition to the indigenous hut features and West Asian elements it also incorporates the traditional Indian feature of the graduated *rathaka* projections which variegate the middle of the rear. The roof of the porch has been divided into three sections, the central one of which has been resolved into a cove vault inside and *charchala* hut form externally. The symbolic form represented in the plan of the Masjidbari and Latan mosques and the methods of roofing seen in these structures are found to have been closely imitated in the regional temples of Bengal (Figs. 33 & 35). (Copied from Dani, *op.cit.*).

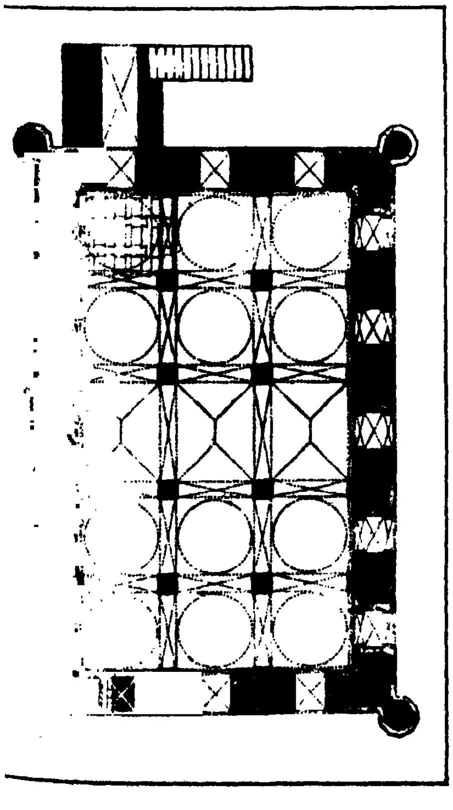
Fig. 9: Plan, Kadam Rasul building (1530), Gaur (Maldah, W.B.). This is a case of the adaption of the three-porched plan of the Bengali huts (Fig. 5e). Unlike the porches in the huts the porches of this building have been enclosed by walls which accommodate a range of three arched openings in the front and one opening on the sides. A modification of the form may be found in the three-porched plan of the temples (Fig. 34). The system of cross vaulting above the porches also appears in the later Hindu temples such as the Krishna Roy temple (1656) in Bishnupur (Bankura, W.B.)

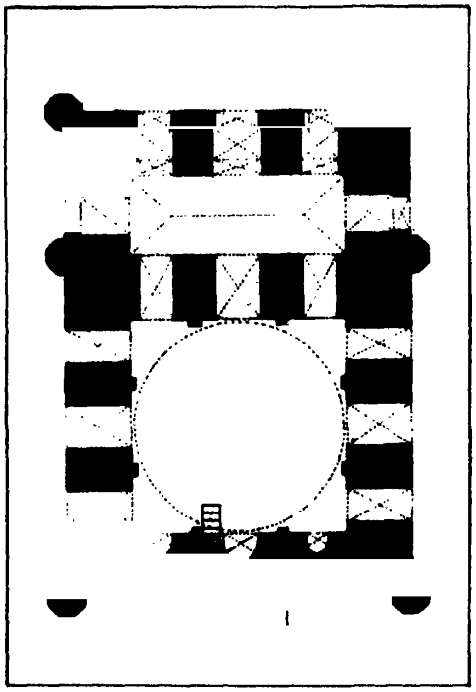
Fig. 10: *(a)* This is a single porched thatched hut with a low curvilinear *charchala* roof composed of four (*char*) *chala*. The form of the substructure below the end of the drooping roof was imitated in the substructure of the regional religious architecture of the Bengalis (Figs. 3, 4, 11, 12), while the form of the roof was transformed in permanent material with certain modifications (Figs. 4 & 26) without disturbing the basic features of the outline.

Fig. 10: *(b)* Examples of the developed form of the curvilinear *chala* roof. The hips of the gradients of the *chalas* have been stiffened to achieve a rather conical shape. This is the model after which the comparatively aspiring *chala* superstructure was built in the temples (Fig. 27). The taller structures are actually *atchalas* in which a lower set of four *chalas* go around the structure to roof the porches or to protect the walls from rain. The portion above this is the upper part of the structure with a *charchala* roof. The number of the chalas









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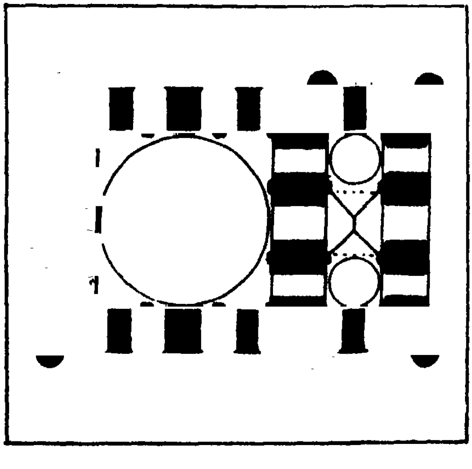

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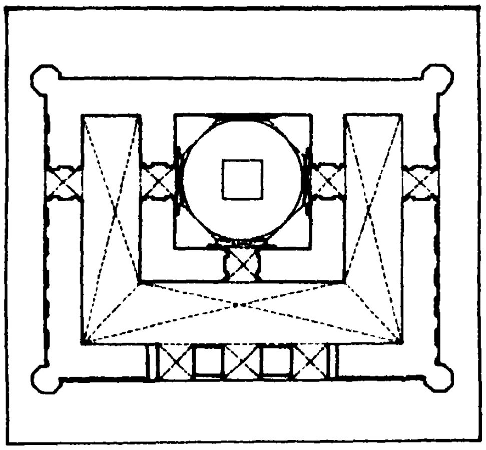

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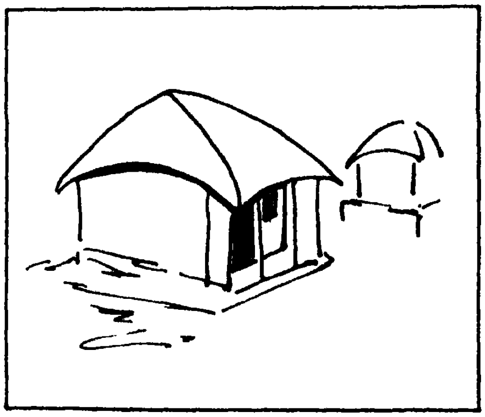

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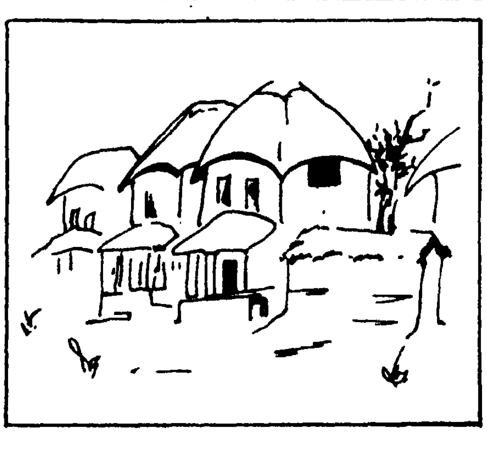

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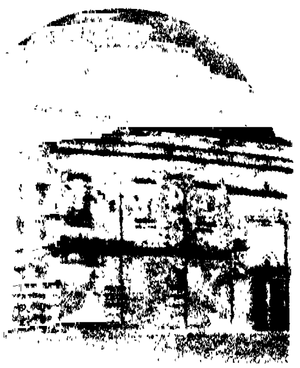
being eight (*at*) this variety of chala roof is known as *atchala*. The *atchala* superstructure of the temples was designed after this form (Fig. 27) with certain important modifications affecting the basic features of the structural scheme.

Fig. 11: Eklakhi mausoleum (first quarter of the 15th century), Hazrat Pandua. This is the earliest example of the regional architecture of the Muslims in Bengal. For an introduction to its *chala* features, see the note on Fig. 4

Fig 12: Kadam Rasul building (1531), Gaur (Maldah, W. B.) This typical example of the regional religious architecture of the Muslims in Bengal is a remarkable structure for different reasons. Its front facade shows the final phase of development of the scheme of ornamentation by arranging the rectangular panels. (Fig. 17) The panels mostly occur on the flanks of the triple entrance which has been conceived as a single unit divided into three sections by two heavy piers. The piers seem to have developed from the Pala pillar from which the piers got their square base and the bands on the shaft (Fig. 13). Tapering towards the middle the piers with the arch on the top give rise to a shape which resembles the *ghat* i.e., pitcher, an auspicious element in the Hindu rituals and a popular element in the architectural ornamentation of the Pala period. The spandrels of the three arches have been separated by rectangular panels. Yet they seem to have been conceived as a compact unit as indicated by the moulding atop. This moulding as well as the other horizontal mouldings of the scheme or ornamentation are slightly curved in accordance with the shape of the substructure. Contained within such lines the ornamentation of this structure helps in clarifying the architectural form in its own terms.



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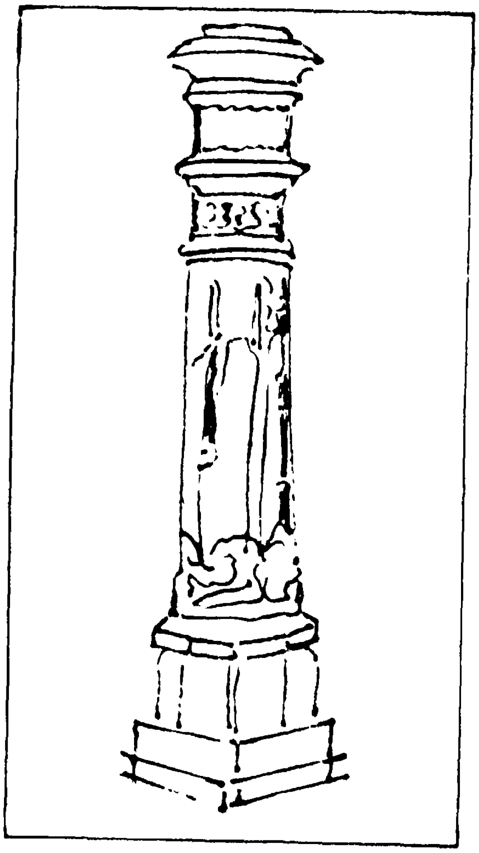
The form of the facade clearly envisages the pattern which was further developed and universally accepted in decorating the facades of the temple (Figs. 29 & 40). (Based on a reproduction in Dani, *op. cit.*)

Fig. 13: Pillar from a Pala temple. Square at the base the monolithic pillar has a polygonal shaft which has been divided into sections by ornamental moulded bands. The pilasters flanking the *mihrab* niches in the mosque were designed after this form. The stumpy piers supporting arches above the entrances in the regional religious buildings of the Muslims also seem to have originated from this type of pillars (*Fig 12*).

Fig. 14: *Mihrab* Adina mosque, Hazrat Pandua. The *mihrab* niche has been enclosed by two pilasters supporting a trifoil arch. The pilasters have been designed directly after the Pala monolithic pillar (Fig. 13), while the trifoil arch with its decoratio is also of Pala origin. The motif atop is a modifie form of the *Kirttimukha* motif. Inside the *mihra* has been decorated in the West Asian fashio with rectangular panels separated by moulde lines.

Fig. 15: Pala door frame, Adina mosque. Th frame is composed of three successive decorate strips containing *different motifs* and design This scheme of composition was adopted in designin the frames enclosing the *mihrabs* in the mosqu (Fig. 16).

Fig. 16: *Mihrab*, mosque (1558) at Kusumb (Rajshahi, B. D.). The exquisitely ornamented *mihra* is one of the finest examples of the symbolic archi tectural ornamentation in Bengal. Like the Pal door frames (Fig. 15) the frame around the *mihra* is composed of successive decorative strips. Th outer one is decorated with the weavy stem o Pala origin, which contains beaded designs an



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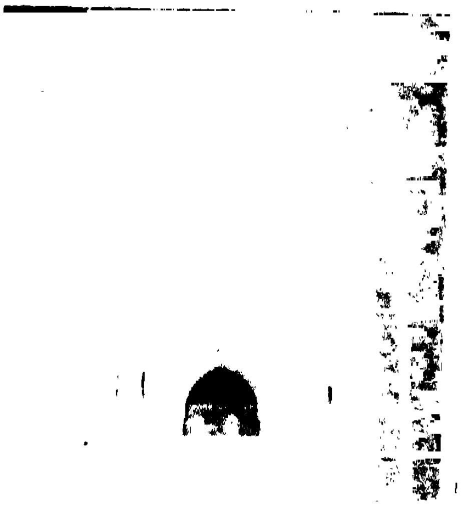

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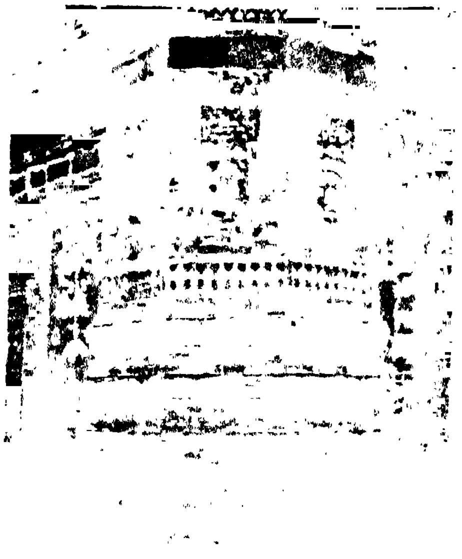

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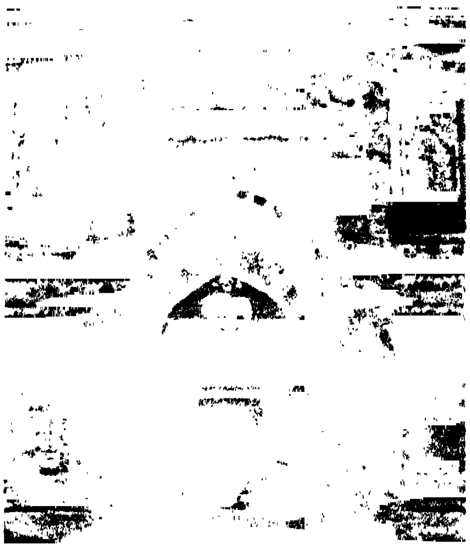
West Asian rosettes in its bends. The inner strip shows the West Asian bow motif (Fig. 23) and rosettes of the same origin. The pilasters which are ultimately related to the monolithic Pala pillars (Fig. 13) have been extremely variegated by such West Asian elements as the tall arch forms and Pala elements as the chain and bell motif (Fig. 20). The extrados of the arch show weavy creepers and West Asian curling creepers. The spandrels show abstract theomorphic forms made of boldly designed beads which in the Hindu temples developed into full-fledged figures both theomorphic and anthropomorphic forms (Figs. 38 & 39) (Based on the reproduction in Dani, *op. cit.*).

Fig 17. Decoration, front facade, Tantipara mosque (1480), Gaur, (Maldah, W. B.). The form of the rectangular panels on the flanks of the doors have been derived from West Asia and were originally used in decorating the *mibrab* (Fig. 14). The vertical arrangement of the panels on the wall repeats the arrangement of the Alai Darwaja at Mehrauli, Delhi and envisages the elaborate wall decoration seen in the later religious buildings of the Muslims and the Hindus in Bengal (Fig. 29). The curling scroll decorated with beads is a West Asian element which became very popular in Bengal (Figs. 38 & 41).

Fig 18: Close up of the decoration across the spandrels of a door of the Tantipara mosque. (Fig. 17). The extrados of the arch has been decorated with a row of rosette which is followed by a str showing the Pala design of the weavy line containir flowers in the bends. The central design of We Asian origin has been surmounted by two strips (West Asian decorative elements e.g., bunches (grapes and flowers. The upper strip is surmounte by mouldings of Indian origin.

Fig. 19: Decoration of a Hindu temple of th late Pala or the Sena period, Zafar Khan Ghazi tomb, Tribeni (Hooghly, W.B.). The series of *ratna malika* containing figurines is well known from th art of the later Pala and the Sena periods. Thi scheme may be compared with the decoration o the Eklakhi mausoleum.

Fig 20: Chain and Bell. (a) Pala temple, (11tl century), (b) Adina mosque, (1375), (c) Chhota Soni mosque, (between 1493-1519), (d) Radhaballabl temple, (second half of the 16th century), Khanakul Krishnanagar, (Hooghly, W. B.), (e) Mosque (1568), Kusumba (Rajshahi, B. D.).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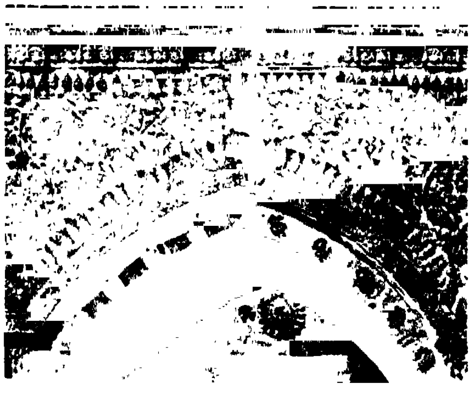
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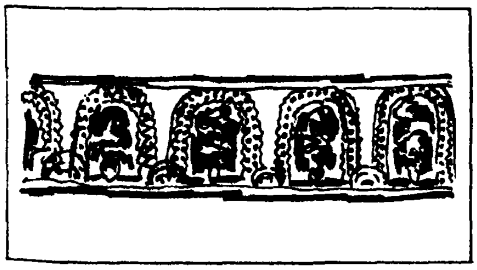
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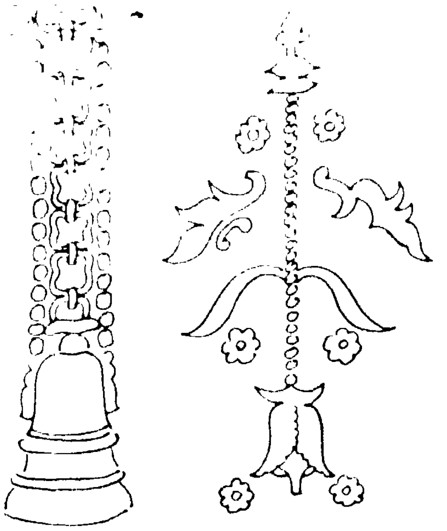
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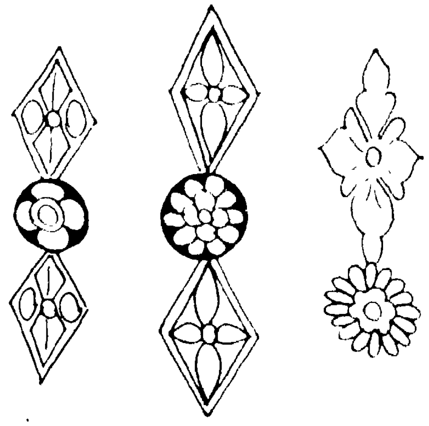

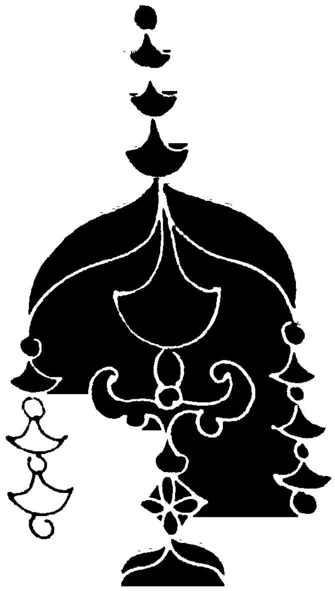
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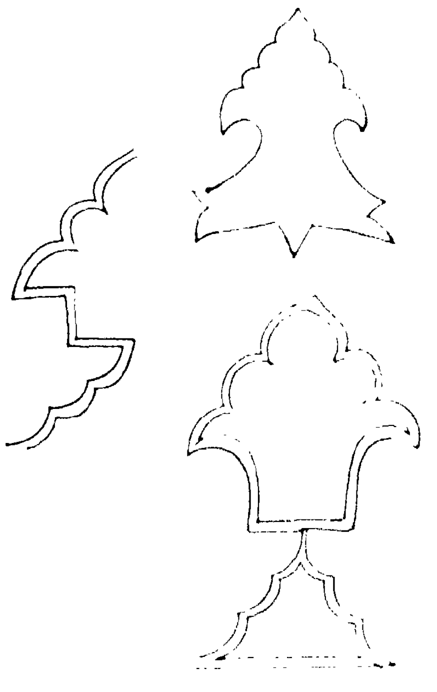

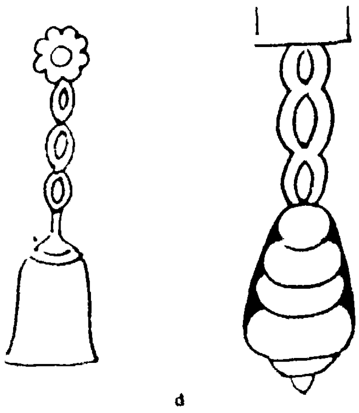
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Fig. 21. Leaf and Flower. (a) Pala temple. (11th century), (b) Jhanjhaniyan mosque, (1535), Sadullapur (Maldah, W. B.), (c) Gopinath temple, (early 17th century), Pabna (B. D.).

Fig. 22 Pointed cusped arch. (a) Blue mosque, (1465), Tabriz (Persia), (b) Tantipara mosque, (1480), (c) Nrisinha temple, (1580), Gokarna (Murshidabad, W. B.)

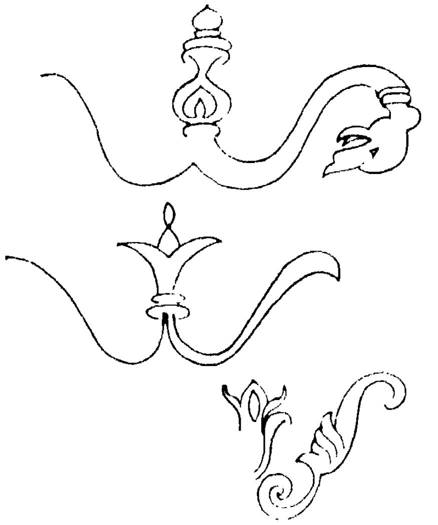
Fig 23 Bow (a) Dome of the Rock, Jerusalam, (b) Madanmohan temple, (1694), Bishnupur (Bankura, W. B.) (For Bow motif in mosque decoration, see Fig. 16).

Fig 24 Deulesvara temple (1849), Kalna (Burdwan, W. B.). A representative example of the simplified *śikharas* marked by extremely shallow indentation of the *rathaka* projections and the sharp curvature of the tower which is variegated by closely set horizontal bands. This regional form of the antiquated traditional sikhara was used in designing the *ratna* of the *ratna* type of temples.

Fig. 25: Gopinath temple (Early 17th century), Pabna (B. D.). It is a *jorbangla* composed of two oblong *dochalas* joined together. With stiffened hips of the gradients and spherical inclination of the smoothly curving top of the *dochalas,* this temple is one of the finest examples of the *dochala* variety of the *chala* type.

Fig 26 Kali temple (mid-17th century) Palpara (Nadia, W.B). With a low *charchala* superstructure this temple closely resembles the low charchala hut (Fig. 10a) and the *charchala* used in the regional mosques of Bengal (Fig. 4). The scheme of ornamentation of the framed single entrance is similar to that of the framed *mihrabs* in the regional mosques. (Fig. 16).

Fig 27. Siva temple (1810), Kalna (Burdwan, W. B.). The *atchala* superstructure of the temple has been formed by placing a replica of a *charchala* temple on the truncated top of the larger lo *charchala* which surmounts the substructure. W stiffened course of the *chalas* which tend to f a conical shape the temple represents the m developed form of the chala roof and is analog with the conical *chala* roof (Fig. 10b). For origin of the framed single entrance, see the n on Fig. 26.



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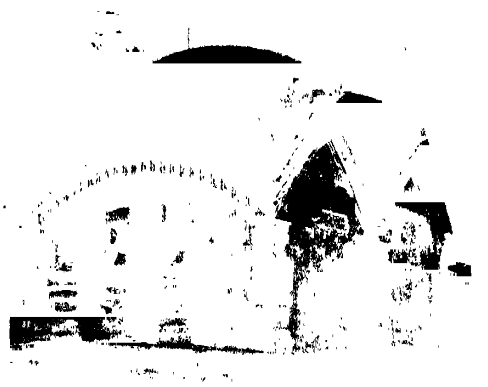

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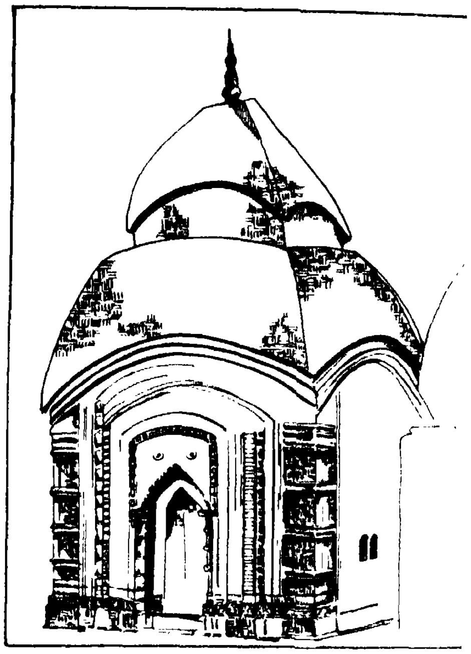

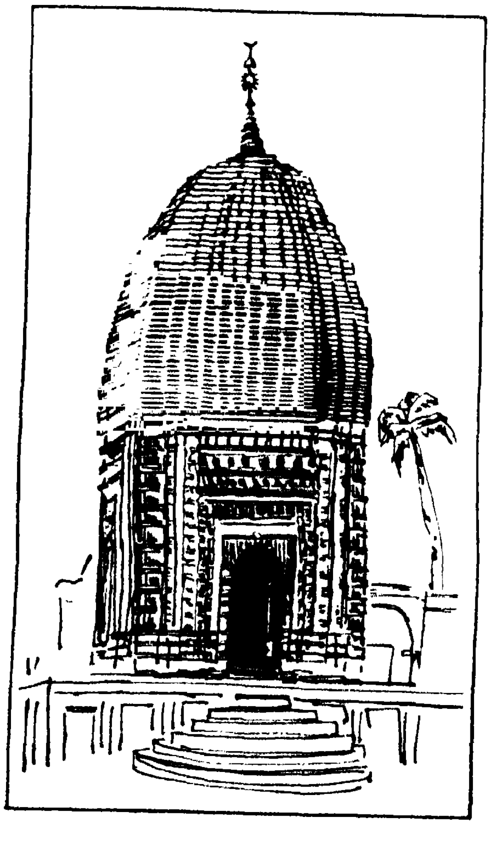

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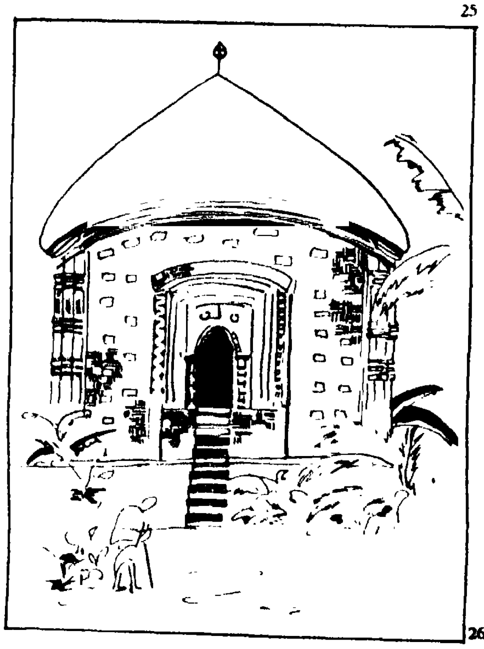

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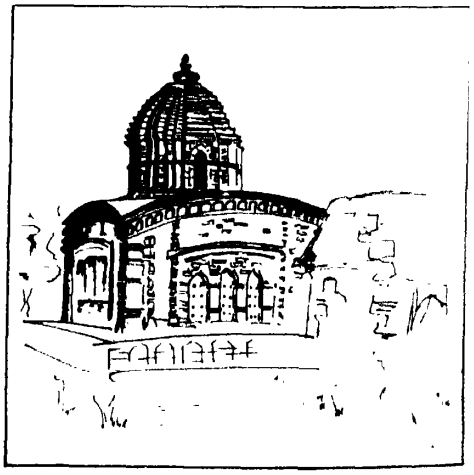
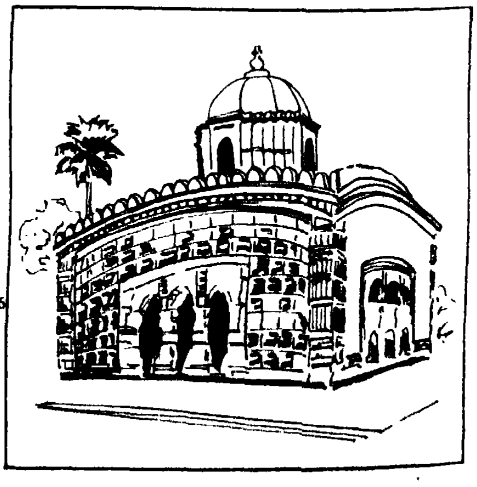




ig 28: **Radha-Madhab temple (1737), Bishnu-ur (Bankura, W. B.). With one *ratna* i.e., pinnacle n a low substructure characterized by *chala* features he temple is an example of the *ekaratna* subtype t the ratna type. The combination of the folk *hala* form with the antiquated traditional *sikhara* as been done along the lines suggested in the egional religious architecture of the Muslims.** Fig 11).

ig 29 **Madanmohan temple (1694), Bishnupur** Bankura, W. B.). The ***ratna*** of this ***ekaratna*** temple as been renovated hence the present form. With rominent mouldings separating the rectangular anels the scheme of ornamentation represents a tage of development from the scheme on the front acade of the Kadam Rasul building. (Fig. 12). The unction of the scheme of ornamentation envisaged n the Kadam Rasul building has been more clearly efined here. For further development of the scheme nd its relation with the architecture, see Fig. 31.

ig 30 Siva temple (late 18th century), Baidya ur (Burdwan, W. B.). With five pinnacles, four at he corners and one at the centre, it is a *pancha atna* temple.

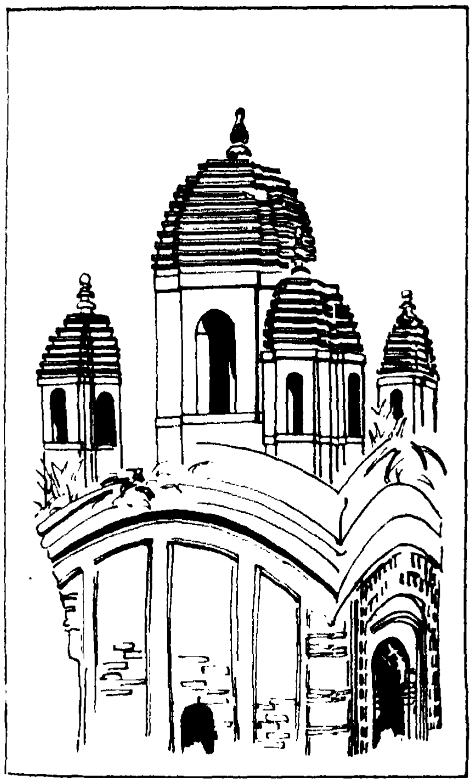
Fig. 31: **Kantaji temple (1692-1723) at Kantanagar (E. Dinajpur, B.D.). Originally it was a *navaratna* with nine *ratnas* arranged on the top of the three succeeding storeys. All the *ratnas* have crumbled and hence the present bald shape. The low substructure with slightly curved top and cornice closely resembles the form of the regional religious building of the Muslims. (Figs. 3, 4, 11 & 12). In most of the temples, however, the degree of the curvature is much more pronounced. The front facade of** the temple is an example of the most elaborate scheme of ornamentation. For close up of the parts of the scheme, see Figs. 40 & 41.

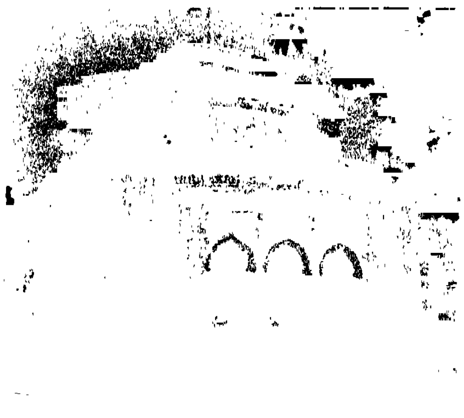
Fig. 32: Kali temple (1855), **Dakshineswar** (24-Parganas, W.B.). **One of the best examples of the *navaratna*** form it is also a representative specimen of the navaratna temples developed in the south western part of Bengal. It shows the farthest extent of the development of the theme of the **combination of the folk traits with the traditional form suggested in the regional religious building of the Muslims.**

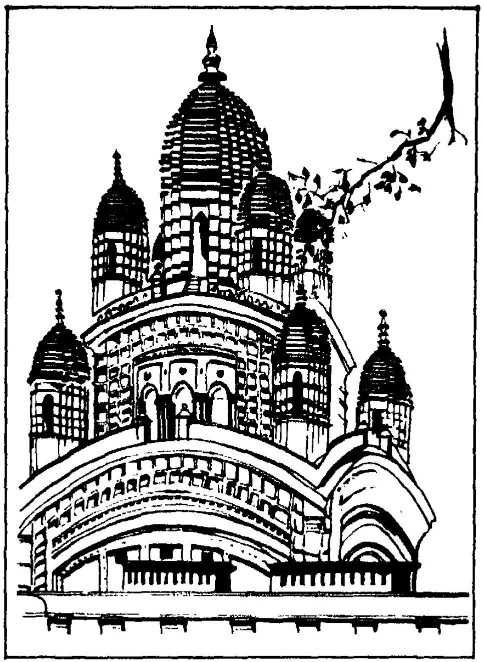
Fig. 33: **Plan, Krishna-Balarama temple (1616), Baghnapara (Burdwan, W.B.). A modified version of the single mosque (Figs. 7 & 8) it shows only one set of triple entrance in the front of the porch. The cella has one door in the front and another on the dexter. The provision of the additional entrance to the cella points out the modification of the plan of the cella in the Hindu temple which as a chamber for individualistic worship is traditionally provided with only one small entrance opening in the front wall. The construction of the interior is closely similar to that of the mosque.**

Fig. 34. Plan, Lakshmi-Baraha temple (second half of the 18th century), **Bagroi** (Midnapore, W.B.). This has been designed after the three porched plan of the huts (Fig. 5e) which has also been adopted in the case of the Kadam Rasul building at Gaur (Fig. 9). It shows an additional entrance to the cella and a range of three arched openings on both the sides.

Fig. 35 Plan, Syam Ray temple (1643), Bishnupur (Bankura, W.B.). This is an example of the four porched plan. The junctions of the porches have been resolved into small corner chambers which is one of the characteristic features of the early







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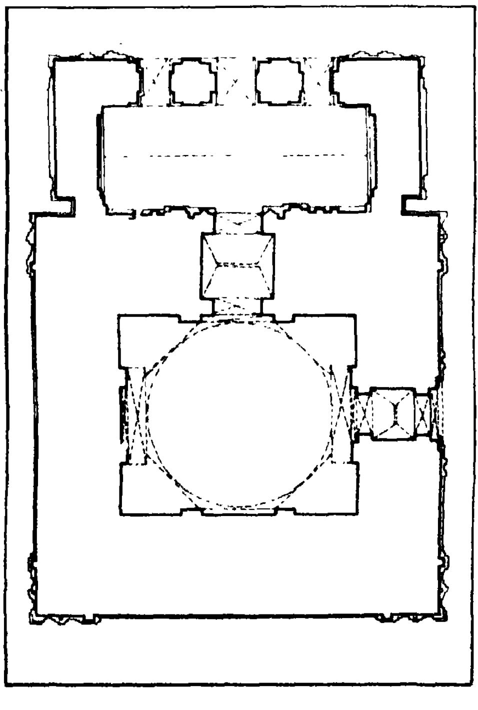

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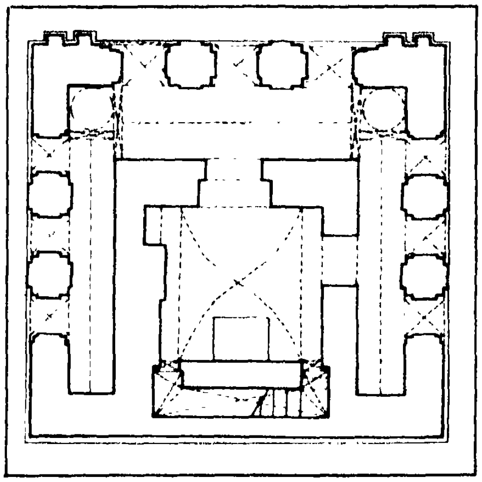

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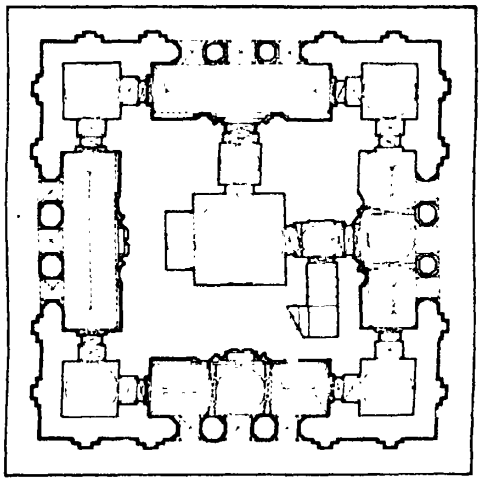

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ratna temples and almost all the *ekratna* temples of Bishnupur. The cella has been roofed by a dome set on squinches as can be found in the Kadam Rasul building in Gaur. (Fig. 9). The southern and western porches have been divided into three sections by two transverse arches in the manner found in the Latan mosque (Fig. 8) while the porch on the east shows a domical vault as in the porch of the Masjidbari mosque. (Fig. 7).

Fig. 36 Triple entrance, Kantaji temple (1692-1723), Kantanagar (E. Dinajpur, B.D.). This is how the West Asian triple entrance was modified in the temples and the arches were variegated with false engrailing in the temples. (Also see Figs. 25, 28 & 29).

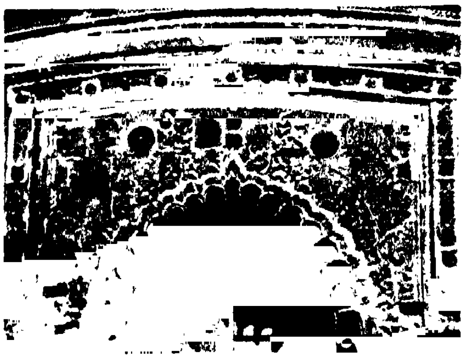
Fig. 37. Decorative niche, Ichhai Ghoser Deul (first half of the 16th century), Gaurangapur (Burdwan, W.B.). It closely imitates the scheme of ornamentation of the *mihrab* niches in the early mosques in Bengal.

Fig. 38: Decoration across the spandrels, Siddhesvari temple (last quarter of the 17th century), Naldanga (Jessor, B.D.). This is a developed form of the ornamentation of the spandrels seen in the Tantipara mosque (Fig. 18). The scheme may be compared with the decoration of the upper part of th *mihrab* of the Kusumba mosque. (Fig. 16). Th scrolls have become schematic, while the abstra theomorphic figures seen above the arch in th Kusumba specimen have been replaced by figure of animals.

Fig. 39: Decoration across the spandrels, Kanta temple, Kantanagar. Scrolls have been replace by figurative panels which in most cases represe scenes from the *Ramayana*.

Fig. 40. Vertical panels, Kantaji temple, Kant nagar (1692-1723). A modified form of the schem seen in the developed facade decoration of the region religious architecture of the Muslims. These close set narrow vertical panels in series occur at the corner of the wall.

Fig 41. Dado. Kantaji temple (1692-1723), Kanta nagar. The decoration shows the curling scrolls an rosettes of West Asian extraction.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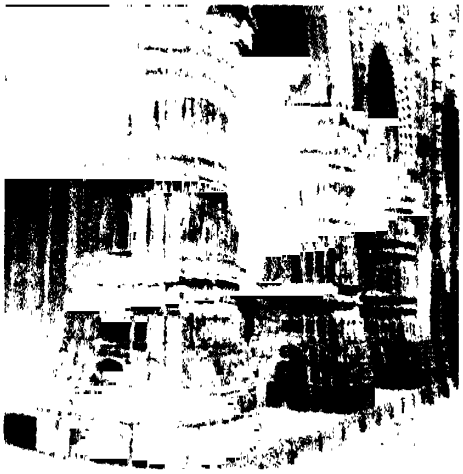
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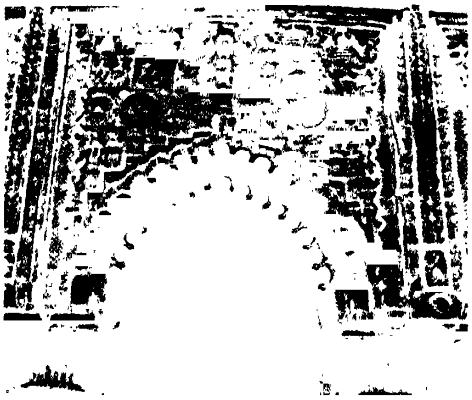
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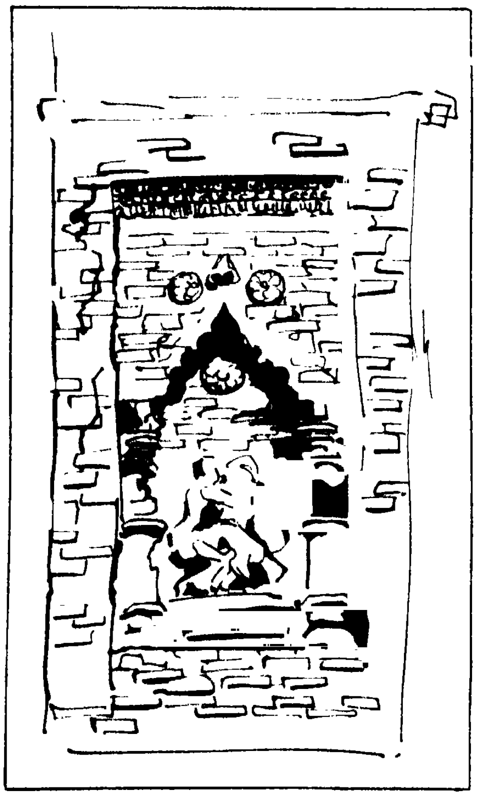
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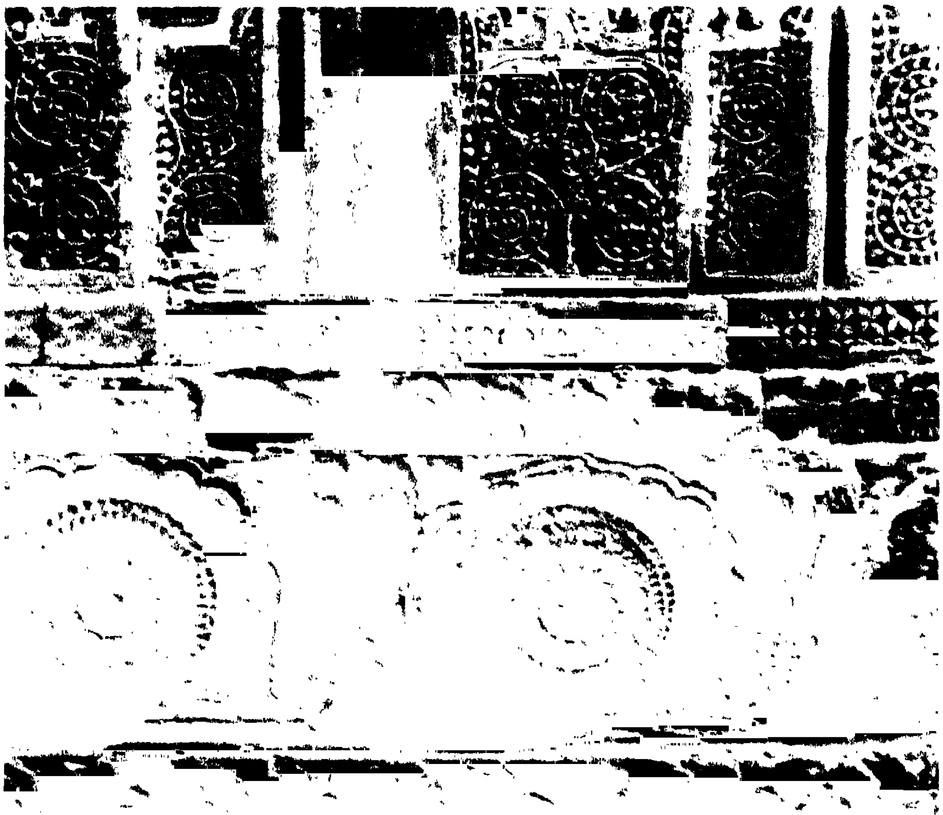

mosques were designed as an oblong hall with horizontal sides greater than the vertical sides according to the conventional practice followed in planning the prayer hall. (Fig. 6). However, there are several instances of mosques being designed in accordance with the different varieties of the plan of the hut. (Figs. 7, 8 & 9). This was done inspite of the fact that the provision of the porch is inconsistent with the clarity that a mosque is supposed to represent, and for that reason is not sanctioned by the universally accepted principles of mosque planning. In the Kadam Rasul building (1531 A.D.) which contains the foot-print of Muhammad, the porch has been continued along both the flanks of the central room. (Fig. 9).

The low facade, its bent top and the curved cornice that determine the shape of the mosque to a great extent were derived directly from the external form of the *chala* hut marked by low facades, drooping curvilinear roof with bent *chhaja*, which comes down to cover the top of the walls (Figs. 10 a & b). Sometimes the dome was replaced by a four-sided *Charchala* shape (Fig. 4). Although the features of the fragile *chala* hut had undergone a certain extent of change and stylization in course of transformation into permanent material, these features effectively brought in the qualities of modesty and pleasantness of the *chala* to the religious structures of the Muslims built during 15th and the first half of the 16th centuries. It may be that the gentle curvature of the *chala* had appeared to be a pleasant architectural form to the Muslims, but the importance of the *chala* features in determining the shape of the mosques etc., and their almost invariable application in these buildings, indicate that the reason for adoption of *chala* features in the religious architecture of the Muslims, was to create a distinctly regional style of architecture having a wide popular appeal.

The Muslims possessed a well-developed architecture of their own before coming to Bengal. The methods and techniques of construction of the regional architecture of the Muslims were those that they had brought into Bengal. The fusion between the elements of Muslim architecture and the indigenous features took place in the external shape of the buildings. The *chala* features were fused with the range of arched openings, two-centred pointed arches, spandrels, pinnacles and the surmounting dome to produce an integrated shape in which the impact of the *chala* dominated.

The urge for synthesis can also be discerned in the ornamentation of the structures belonging to the regional style of Muslim architecture in Bengal. Even before the emergence of the regional style, the process of synthesis had started in the realm of ornamentation of buildings as evidenced by the decorative motifs on the tympanums, *mihrabs* and the *mimbar* of the Adina mosque in Hazrat Pandua (Maldah district). The Muslim had brought the traditions of ornamental art work from West Asia, particularly Arabia. On the other hand, the people of Bengal had a great heritage of artistic activities. Decorative elements derived from West Asian sources were mixed with indigenous ones, as also with the representations of the local flowers and vegetation, to create motifs and designs for the decorations of the walls. The linear scheme that regulates the designs resemble West Asian, (particularly Persian) linear treatment. In such cases the indigenous motifs and designs are often changed to suit the linear arrangement. In other cases the motifs and designs that came in from the Pala-Sena art tradition, as well as the West Asian motifs and designs, have been accepted as such. Although the decoration of the regional Muslim architecture of Bengal is a heterogenous collection of motifs and designs derived from different sources, the artists were successful in producing an integrated effect both in the individual composite panels and in the elaborate ornamentation of an entire wall. This particular style of ornamentation owing to its medium, which is mostly terracotta in association with the regional style of Muslim architecture, may also be called regional. (Figs. 13—23).

(4)

Available data indicates that the regional forms of the temples had emerged in the Gangetic plain of Bengal in the second half of the 15th century under the circumstances that prevailed during the regime of the independent Sultans. It has been discussed above that the impact of these circumstances had been intensifying the regional identification of the people of Bengal, which had become the most important factor in their life. Naturally, the intense regional identification of the people dominated the character of the style of the temples, built from the second half of the 15th century which, owing to this reason, may be called the regional style of temple building in Bengal.

The regional temples of Bengal may be classified into three major groups according to the shape of the superstructure. These are (a) *chala* (hut shaped), (b) *rathna* (pinnacled) and (c) *sikhara*. The first two types were created during the revival of temple building in Bengal, while the ancient *sikhara* type had come into this period through the continuity of tradition. However, the *sikhara* form was modified to such an extent that it retained only the bare essentials of the ancient temple type. The regional *sikhara* is a simple unpretentious structure with a serrated superstructure the walls of which show pronounced inward inclination from the beginning and meet each other in a point which carried the finial. (Fig. 24). Of the three types, the *chala* type (Figs. 25, 26, 27) which is the imitation of the residential thatched hut of the people of Bengal, is by far the most popular type of temple. Although the traditional sikhara type of temple was known to the Bengalis as the model of a temple, the *chala* type had captivated their imagination and had earned great popularity. It seems that such a localisation of symbols was prompted by the dominant regional identification of the people of Bengal, who, during the regime of the independent Sultans were confined within their immediate environment.

Some of the elements of the *chala* were used in designing the *ratna* type of temple. The *ratna* type consists of a low substructure, with a low roof, which is surmounted by one or more pinnacles. Externally the substructure resembles the *chala* hut in its low facade with bent top, curved cornice and in the curvature of the roof. The pinnacle is the representation of a complete temple in miniature form usually belonging to the modified *sikhara* type. (Figs. 28—32).

Almost all the variations of the *chala* hut, both in plan and in elevation, are found to have imitated the *chala* temples. The oblong plan of the *dochala* hut with vertical sides and nearly half of the horizontal side, was imitated in the *dochala* temples, two of which were sometimes joined together to obtain the *jorbangla* form. Mostly square in plan the *charchala* temples usually consist of a single chamber and do not have the porch in front which precedes the living room in most of the *charchala* huts. (Fig. 26). The smaller *atchala* temples show similar plan. (Fig. 27). But in the larger *atchala* temples, whether square or oblong in shape, the porch appears to be an essential element. (Fig. 33). Further elaboration of the plan on the lines of the elaborated plan of the *chala* hut was done in the *ratna* and some of the larger *atchala* temples in which the sides and the rear of the cella are also preceded by porches. (Figs. 34, 35). In the modified plans these porches have been transformed into antechambers attached, in most cases, to the cella and accessible from it.

Most of the problems relating to the transformation of the features of the *chala* into a structure built in permanent material, were solved in the regional architecture of the Muslims. The outline of a *chala* structure in permanent material upto the cornice was also evolved in the regional Muslim architecture. All these were freely adopted in the *chala* and the *ratna* temples. Besides, the shape achieved through the combination of the low *chala* substructure and the traditional dome in the regional Muslim architecture may be taken to be the precursor of the *ratna* type of temple, which is also built by combining the low *chala* substructure with the traditional *sikhara* temple. The simplest form of the ratna type i.e., the single-ratna structure differed from the single-domed structure of the regional style of the Muslims only in the shape of the surmounting element. (Figs. 11, 28, 29).

It has been mentioned above that the Muslims had introduced in Bengal certain improved techniques and methods of construction that they had brought with them. By the second half of the 15th century, when temple building was revived in the Gangetic plain of Bengal, these methods and techniques of construction had become fairly popular in Bengal. Right from the beginning of revival of the temple building, these techniques and methods have been used in the temples. Like the single-domed structures, or the mosques with a single dome covering the sanctuary, the sanctum of the two major variations of the *chala* type e.g., the *charchala* and the *atchala* and of the *ratna* type of temples, are covered by a dome. The external *chala* shape is built around the internal dome in the case of a *chala* temple, while the *ratna* of a *ratna* temple is placed above the dome.

Like the constructional elements and the features of the external shape, the motifs and designs that decorate the temples and the scheme of ornamentation were also taken from the regional style of architecture of the Muslims. Not only the synthetic motifs and designs, but the West Asian motifs and designs also were frequently employed in decorating the walls of the temples. (Figs. 20-23, 37-41).

Although the Muslims had started using the features of the *chala* they had never adopted the full-fledged *chala* shape in designing the entire superstructure of their religious buildings. (Figs. 3, 4, 11 & 12). The dome must dominate the superstructure in a Muslim religious building. There are no doubt certain instances in which the *charchalas* have replaced the dome. But the *charchala* in such cases is either subservient to the main dome or forms a row in a multi-domed superstructure. (Fig. 4). The *chala* shape was fully adopted in the *chala* type of temple, which is characterized by a curvilinear *chala* superstructure. Almost all the variations of the *chala* hut were adopted in the *chala* type of temples. Thus we get the two-sided and the four-sided superstructure of the *dochala* (Fig. 25) and the *charchala* (Fig. 26) temples respectively, and the *atchala* temple which is basically a *charchala* but carries the replica of a *charchala* on its truncated top (Fig. 27). Each of the variations fully developed in the temples and experiments were made to get further variations. The curvilinear roof is the logical concomitant of the curved low facade and the curved cornice. Since the dome is an indispensible element of the Muslim religious architecture, the *chala* had either no place or a very restricted role to play in the superstructure of the regional style of Muslim architecture in Bengal. The task which was left unfinished in the structures of the Muslims was completed in the temples belonging to the *chala* type.

It has been noted above that the shape of the *ratna* type was achieved by combining the traditional *sikhara* type with the *chala* shape on the lines suggested in the regional Muslim architecture in Bengal. In its simplest form the *ratna* temple contains one turret on the top of the *chala* roof. (Figs. 28 & 29). The superstructure was gradually elaborated by multiplying the number of the surmounting pinnacles as also by the addition of storeys (Figs. 30 & 32) which repeat the shape of substructure in a gradually reducing dimension. The elaborated form of the *ratna* temple represents the final phase of the development of the idea of combining the traditional shape with the shape of the indigenous *chala*.

(5)

While emphasizing the fundamental difference between the civilization of the people of India and the civilization of the Muslim conquerors in his book *Indian Architecture* (*Islamic Period*), Percy Brown has observed that 'Nothing could illustrate more graphically the religious and racial diversity, or emphasise more decisively the principle under lying the consciousness of each community, than the contrast between their respective places of worship, as represented by the mosque on the one hand, and the temple on the other'. (Brown, 1942:1). The difference is further accentuated by the fact that the Muslims were the conquerors and Indians the conquered people.

Yet the regional architecture of the Muslims in Bengal and the regional temples of Bengal have much in common between them. On the basis of these similarities, it may be said that the regional Muslim architecture and the regional temple architecture together constitute the common regional style of the religious architecture of Bengal. Although the Muslim religious structures were required to conform to the tradition that the Muslims had built up in course of time, the necessities of effecting a compromise with the regional life and culture of Bengal prompted the Muslims to modify their religious structures in terms of the dominant regional identification of the people of Bengal. It is due to this reason that enclosed compounds, *minars*, ablution ponds were dispensed with in building the mosques and the isolated, closed-in structure of modest dimension was adopted. For the same reason the features of the *chala* dominated the shape of these religious structures of the Muslims in Bengal. This is how the synthetic religious architecture of the Muslims in Bengal received the strong regional orientation which accounts for its being the source from which most of the basic traits of the shape and the technique and methods of construction of the regional temple architecture were derived. The history of temple-building in Bengal since the last quarter of the 15th century, shows that these elements from the regional Muslim architecture were fully accultured in the main trend of temple-building and further developments had occurred on the lines suggested in the regional Muslim architecture. In fact, the developed temples represent the final phase of the regional style of religious architecture of Bengal. The growth and development of the regional style of religious architecture of Bengal may be taken to be one of the major manifestations of the increasing intensity of the regional identification of the Bengalis, which made the continuity of the style of the religious architecture of the Muslims through the temples of the Hindus.

Through their dependence on the internal forces and attempts to effect compromise with the local life and culture, the independent Sultans of Bengal created certain conditions which appeared to be particularly favourable for the Hindus. The Hindus commanded the political and social forces at the local level and controlled the major means of production i.e., land. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary for the Sultans to earn the sympathy and support of the Hindus. In this context, the prominence given by the Sultans to the dominant regional identity of the Bengalis in determining their policies provided the Hindus, who formed the majority of the population, with the opportunity of asserting their Bengali regional identity with greater confidence and on a bigger scale. This explains the flourishing of the regional culture of the Hindus including the revival of temple-building during the regime of the independent Sultans. The temples testify that by the last quarter of the 15th century regional identification had become the vital force in shaping the cultural life of the Bengalis. It is under the influence of this force that most of the basic traits of the temples were derived from the regional Muslim architecture and the shape of the residential *chala* hut was adopted in designing the shape of the most popular type of temple. The traditional *sikhara* temple was familiar in Bengal. But the immense popularity of the *chala* type indicates that the local symbols were of much greater importance to the people of Bengal, than what had come down to them through more ancient continuities of tradition.

(This article is largely based on the author's paper entitled "Religious Architecture in Bengal (15th-17th century): A study of the Major Trends" which has been published in the Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society, Vol. V., No 1)

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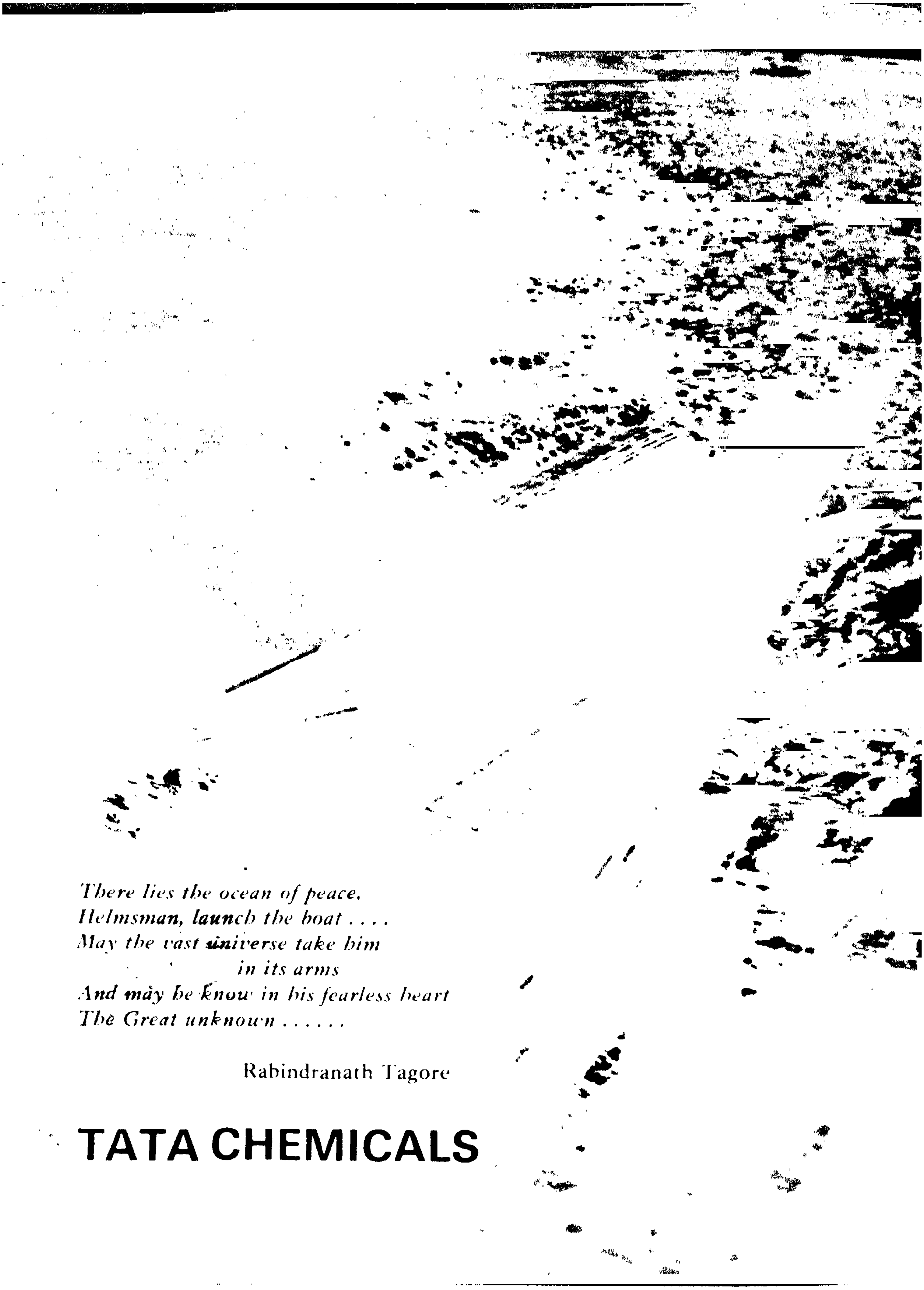

There lies the ocean of peace,
Helmsman, launch the boat . . . .
May the vast universe take him
in its arms
And may he know in his fearless heart
The Great unknown . . . . . .

Rabindranath Tagore

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PREFACE

BUDDHIST ART IN LICCHAVI NEPAL
by Pratapaditya Pal

A INTRODUCTION

B BUDDHISM IN LICCHAVI NEPAL AND THE MONASTERY

C LICCHAVI CAITYA

D THE BUDDHA IMAGE

E THE BODHISATTVAS

F CONCLUSION

Cover: Nativity of the Buddha. National Museum, Kathmandu. 9th (?) century. (Courtesy: O. E. Nelson)

MARG presents a monograph on Buddhist Art in Licchavi Nepal by one of the foremost scholars of Indian Art history. The tradition of Nepalese Art has not been discovered in our country to the extent to which it is necessary. This essay reveals that the inter-relations between the two neighbouring cultures were frequent and led to mutual enrichening.

Dr. Pal is currently the Curator of Indian & Islamic Art in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

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May the blessed teacher save the world from grief,
who like the sun dispels all darkness,
breaker of transmigration's ramparts,
prince of saints, destroyer
of that skillet for the bulbs of life, proud Love.

Vasukalpa
as translated by D. H. H. Ingalls
An Anthology of Sanskrit Court Poetry,
Cambridge (Mass.), 1965, p. 59.

Preface

In 1958 when I chose to study the arts of Nepal as the special area for my postgraduate research, only about a dozen significant articles had been devoted to the subject. Writing in 1953, Benjamin Rowland (*The Art and Architecture of India*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books) admitted "The entire later history of Nepal has been linked with India, especially after the foundation of a feudal dynasty by the Licchavis from India in the second century A.D. " but his comments about the Nepali sculptural tradition were less accurate though typical of the period. He almost dismissed the whole subject by stating, "Among the earliest examples of Nepalese sculpture are a number of bronze statuettes in the collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. These figures very clearly reveal the derivation of Nepalese sculpture from late Gupta or Pala models."

For almost another decade, the study of Nepali sculpture remained confined to bronzes. Indeed, until Stella Kramrisch organized the 1964 Asia House exhibition of the Arts of Nepal, no one seriously believed that the Nepali sculptural tradition was ancient. And ever since my first visit to that enchanting valley, I have remained convinced of the artistic genius of the Nepali people. It is quite remarkable how generations of artists in that diminutive valley (much smaller than the Los Angeles Basin) had created thousands of images and sculptures for what must have been a devotion-hungry public.

The present essay is concerned with Buddhist sculpture created when the Nepal Valley was ruled by a dynasty known as the Licchavis. Although it is not known exactly when they came into the valley from their original homeland in Bihar, it is certain that they had gained control of the kingdom by the mid-fourth century. And although we are not sure when their political hegemony ended, there is evidence to show that they may still have enjoyed power in the mid-ninth century. At any rate, what does seem certain is that it was during their rule that Nepal came under the strong influence of the Indian civilization of the Gangetic Valley. We have no way of determining whether or not the Licchavis of Nepal were Buddhists, but it will be evident from the present monograph that this religion was well established in the country and inspired some of the finest sculptures created during the long and felicitous reign of the Licchavis.

I am particularly happy that *Marg* is devoting a whole issue to this essay and has also made the reprinted monograph possible. This is especially welcome since some of the most important articles on Nepali sculpture appeared in the pages of this journal in the forties and early fifties. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Mulk Raj Anand for his personal interest in realizing the publication of this monograph.

Among many others whom I should thank, Dr. Mary Slusser must be singled out. Her indefatigable researches over the last few years have enhanced our knowledge of Nepali art and culture immensely. Her knowledge is only exceeded by her generosity in sharing her materials with others. In Los Angeles, I am indebted to members of my staff and to Mr. Ray Marlowe of the Museum's Bookshop for their cooperation and good will.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this monograph to Mr. Porter McCray of the JDR 3rd Fund, not only for his constant encouragement and support for my own work, but also for what he has done for countless other Asian scholars and artists since the Fund was established. Politicians and diplomats always loom large in the public eye, but people like Mr. McCray or organizations such as the JDR 3rd Fund probably contribute more towards a better understanding of the different cultures than ministers and ambassadors.

Los Angeles, 1974

—Pratapaditya Pal

Buddhist Art in Licchavi Nepal

Introduction

I

Gautama Buddha was born in Lumbini which today is situated within the political boundaries of the Kingdom of Nepal. But since the time of the Buddha until almost the last century, both historically and geopolitically, only the valley of the river Bagmati was known as Nepal. And there is no historical evidence to prove that the Buddha ever visited the valley. On the contrary, we are told in a later Buddhist text that the Master discouraged monks from visiting the mountain-girt kingdom because of the arduous nature of the journey. Tradition, however, claims that not only the Buddha Śākyamuni but other Buddhas before him had also visited the valley; and Nepali Buddhist texts associate the very origin of the valley with Buddhism.

Equally apocryphal is the story of the Emperor Aśoka's visit to the valley. Traditionally he is said to have founded the city of Patan (Lalitpur or Lalitapattana) and to have erected five stūpas in that city. While four of these stūpas, one of which is illustrated here (Fig. 1), may well retain the form of the stūpa as it prevailed in Aśoka's India, there is no evidence to believe that they are as old. Tradition also associates the town of Deo Patan with Aśoka's family, and we are informed that his daughter Cārumati visited Nepal, married a local prince, and settled down in Deo Patan. The group of assorted religious and residential buildings known today by the name of Cha bahil (Cārumati vihāra) is considered to be the remnants of a monastery founded by Cārumati. Whether founded by her or not, the bahil was certainly an important Buddhist site during the Licchavi period (ca. A D 300-850), as I shall presently discuss.

Apart from the so-called Aśokan stūpas at Patan, the only other monument which is said to be of hoary antiquity is that known as Svayambhūnath. The earliest written record of the stūpa's existence occurs in a Buddhist manuscript of the eleventh century.[1] On one of the folios a conventional stūpa is illuminated (Fig. 2) with the label *Nepāle svayambhū-caitraḥ* (*caityaḥ*). It will at once be apparent that the eleventh century illumination shows a substantially different structure than the present one. However, that the site was already an important Buddhist sanctuary as early as the second century of the Christian era is evident from an image of Hāritī which is worshipped locally as Śītalā. Although a replacement of the nineteenth century, the image must have been a close copy of the original for it strongly reflects the Gandhāran style of Kuṣāṇa India. That the Svayambhūnāth area continued to be an important Buddhist site during the Licchavi period is vouchsafed by the recent discovery of two Licchavi inscriptions in that region.[2] It must be noted, however, that there is no mention of Svayambhūnāth in any of the Licchavi inscriptions where names of important *vihāras* are included. Possibly, the *vihāra* attached to the shrine was known during the Licchavi period by some other name.[3]

Buddhism in Licchavi Nepal and the Monastery

II

Some idea of the flourishing condition of Buddhism in Licchavi Nepal may be gleaned from Chinese records. Hsüan-tsang, the Chinese pilgrim who visited India in the first half of the seventh century, did not go to Nepal but left us a hearsay account. He informs us that there were about 2,000 monks in the country belonging to both the Śrāvakayāna (Hīnayāna) and the Mahāyāna schools and that Buddhist monasteries and Brāhmanical temples touched one another.[4]

The information about Buddhism in Nepal as given in other Chinese sources is equally scrappy. In the *New History of the T'ang Dynasty* we are told that "the people worshipped the five celestial spirits and sculptured their images in stone. Each day they wash them with purifying water. They roast a lamb and offer it in sacrifice." Elsewhere we are informed that the King Nalingtipo (Narendradeva) wears a "breloc belt ornamented with the figure of the Buddha."[5]

Wang Hsüan-t'se who visited the court of Nepal as the Chinese ambassador in the middle of the seventh century seems to have been more interested in supernatural phenomena rather than religious. However, he does indicate that Maitreya was venerated in the country at the time and describes a wooded and isolated hill with a large number of temples "disposed there in numerous storeys which one would take for a crown of clouds."[6] One wonders if this is not an allusion to the hill of Svayambhūnāth.

It would appear therefore from the Chinese sources that not only Māhayāna but also tāntric Buddhism had struck roots in the soil by the seventh century. The "five spirits" mentioned in the new T'ang history may refer to the five Tathāgatas of the Vajrayāna, while the sacrifice of lambs, inconsistent with Buddhist liturgy, may indicate peculiar tāntric practices. The only other literary allusion to tāntric Buddhism in early Nepal occurs in the Tibetan polygraphist Tārānāth's *History of Buddism.*[7] According to him the great Yogācāra philosopher Vasubandhu visited Nepal in the fourth century and initiated the people in the practice of the *mantras*. There is no historical evidence, however, to corroborate this observation of Tārānāth.

A more informative, though by no means complete, picture of Buddhism may be gleaned from the many Licchavi inscriptions that have come to light in recent years.

The earliest epigraph related to Buddhism was issued in the mid-sixth century and records the donation of an image of Āryāvalokiteśvaranātha who is addressed as *bhagavata*.[8] At least this image of Avalokiteśvara is still extant and will be discussed later. Two other fragmentary inscriptions of the same period, discovered at Kathmandu, also mention the consecration of images of Avalokiteśvara.[9] It is evident therefore that by the mid-sixth century the cult of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara was firmly established in the valley.

Only a few inscriptions refer to the Buddha directly. In one of these he is called the sole guru of the world.[10] In two others he is alluded to as the great sage (mahāmuni) and as the lord of sages (muniśa).[11]

Perhaps the most interesting inscription for the study of the Buddhist pantheon in Licchavi Nepal is that carved on the four sides of a small caitya at Tyagaltol in Patan.[12] It consists of four couplets (*śloka*) each carved on one of the cardinal faces of the *caitya*. Each couplet eulogises either a Tathāgata or a Bodhisattva.

North:	Akṣobhya and Samantabhadra
South:	Mañjuśrī
West :	Śākyamuni and Vajrāpāṇi
East :	Amitābha with Lokeśa and Mahāsthāmaprāpta

In later Buddhist pantheon the Bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Vajrapāṇi are associated respectively with the Tathāgatas Vairocana and Akṣobhya. But here Akṣobhya is given Samantabhadra, while Vajrapāṇi, who is described as *guhyādhipa* or lord of the *guhyas* and as carrying a *vajra* placed upon a lotus, is associated with Śākyamuni, the lord of sages. This is reminiscent of Vajrapāṇi's role in the early Buddhist narrative art, particularly of Gandhāra, where he acts as a constant companion and a guardian of Śākyamuni. In the *Lalitavistara*[13] as well Vajrapāṇi is referred to as *guhyādhipa* which indicates his conceptual identification with Kubera who is also addressed as the lord of the *guhyakas*. Akṣobhya, as his name implies, is characterized as imperturbable but he is said to be of white complexion whereas in later iconography he is usually blue. Samantabhadra is considered to be the dispenser of bliss on earth and no mention is made of his attributes.

It is rather interesting that while three couplets include a Tathāgata along with one or more Bodhisattvas, the couplet on the southern face extols Mañjuśrī alone. His body is said to be effulgent with jewel-like flowers symbolizing the true religion. He is also said to be enlightened and conversant with the supreme religion.[14] Possessing an unfaltering intellect, he is tenderhearted and holds a lotus. It is obvious, therefore, that to the pious Buddhist responsible for this couplet Mañjuśrī was especially venerable.

The couplet on the east eulogises Amitābha. Described as a sun among the Jinas, he is the repository of bliss and the light of whose wisdom dispels the darkness of delusion or ignorance. He is accompanied by Lokeśa, who holds the lotus and removes all worldly fears, and by Mahāsthāmaprāpta who has a soft expression. This must be one of the earliest iconographic descriptions of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara known so far. It is also clear that this last couplet is a sort of summary of those verses in the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* where these two bodhisattvas are described as constant companions of Amitābha in the Sukhāvatī.[15]

Interestingly only two of the later Vajrayāna pentad of Tathāgatas are included in the Patan inscription. They are Akṣobhya and Amitābha who are also the only two of the pentad mentioned in the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* and the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*. Although the inscription does not bear a date paleographically it can be assigned to the first-half of the seventh century. I will return to this inscription later, but it almost certainly indicates that the Vajrayāna pentad of the five Tathāgatas was yet to find popularity in Nepal in the seventh century.

Thus, according to the epigraphical evidence the Buddhist pantheon in Licchavi Nepal appears to have been somewhat limited. Apart from the Buddha or Śākyamuni, the only other Tathāgatas mentioned are Aksobhya and Amitābha. Among the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara was certainly the most popular figure. The others who were at least familiar are Samantabhadra, Vajrapāṇi, Mañjuśrī, and Mahāsthāmaprāpta.

III

Epigraphical evidence makes it quite clear that Buddhism in Licchavi Nepal revolved actively around the monastery. A number of monasteries are mentioned by name and the first inscription to do so is a royal edict of Aṁśuvarman issued in the year 32, presumably soon after his accession to the throne.[16] According to the edict he made a number of monetary grants to the major religious establishments in the valley. While the largest number of donations were made to Śaiva shrines six monasteries were also among the recipients. These were Gumvihāra, Śrī Mānavihāra, Śrī Rājavihāra, Kharjurikāvihāra, Madhyamvihāra, and Sāmānyavihāra. The list can be enlarged by several other names, culled from later inscriptions, such as Sujātaprabhuvihāra, Śrī Śivadevavihāra, Abhayarucivihāra, Kalyānaguptavihāṭa, Puṣpavāṭikāvihāra, and Ajikavihāra.[17]

It will at once be apparent that the majority of the vihāras were named after their founders, who were either kings or influential nobles. Incidentally, it is of interest to note that a large number of Śiva liṅgas, consecrated during the Licchavi period, were also named after their donors.

The prefix *Śrī* before the names of three of the vihāras, Mānavihāra, Śivadevavihāra, and Rājavihāra, very likely indicate that they were royal foundations.[18] The *Gopālarāja Vaṁśāvalī*, the most reliable of the Nepali chronicles, informs us that both Mānadeva I and Śivadeva were responsible for founding vihāras that bear their names.[19] It has further been suggested that the Rājavihāra mentioned in Aṁśuvarman's Harigaon inscription was founded by Aṁśuvarman.[20] However, we are also told in the chronicles that Mānadeva's father Dharmadeva established a Rājavihāra along with a Dharmacaitya.[21] It is possible that this vihāra was later augumented by Aṁśuvarman and hence came to be associated with his name.

The fact that a number of monasteries are thus associated with Licchavi princes does not necessarily mean that these monarchs were Bauddhas. The early Licchavis are curiously silent about their personal religious beliefs. Nevertheless, that they may have been more inclined towards Buddhism is not only evident from the *Gopālarāja Vaṁśāvalī* but also from the Paśupatināth inscription of Jayadeva II.[22] There, while referring to his ancestors, he explicitly states that King Vṛṣadeva was a Buddhist (*sugata śāsana pakṣapāti*).

It is rather curious that all the Licchavis who precede Aṁśuvarman do not allude in their inscriptions to any personal deity, whether Buddhist or Brāhmanical. Apart from the scrap of information furnished by Jayadeva about his ancestor Vṛṣadeva, the only other royal personality of whose religious inclinations we know something is Mānadeva's mother, Rājyavatī. It was because of her that Mānadeva consecrated an image of Viṣṇu vikrānta which certainly indicates that the dowager queen was a devout Vaiṣṇavī.

Aṁśuvarman was the first monarch in Licchavi Nepal who categorically invoked Paśupatināth at the beginning of every royal edict and declared his unqualified allegiance to this deity who has since remained the patron god of the country. Jiṣṇugupta and Viṣṇugupta, who held *de facto* power after Aṁśuvarman while puppet Licchavis sat on the throne, also explicitly announced their allegiance to Paśupatināth. At the same time Viṣṇugupta appears to have been an ardent follower of Viṣṇuism as well. Significantly, after Narendradeva overthrew the Guptas and re-established Licchavi supremacy, he too at once adopted the stereotyped formula declaring his devotion to Paśupatināth.[23] Thereafter, the Licchavis who succeeded Narendradeva invariably repeated the formula and Jayadeva II even composed hymns extolling Śiva.[24]

It is clear from the large number of inscriptions issued during Aṁśuvarman's reign that both he and members of his family were avowed Śaivas and, particularly, worshippers of Paśupatināth. He not only began his edicts by invoking Paśupatināth but also named his royal residence Kailāśakuṭa, which is the abode of Śiva. It seems likely that such a sudden and explicit declaration of allegiance to Śiva was not simply an act of devotion but was politically motivated.

The first temple listed in Aṁśuvarman's inscription of the year 32 is Paśupatināth; the second is Changu Narayan which is followed by the names of six vihāras. He then makes donations to several other Brāhmanical shrines, five of which are dedicated to Śiva. In my opinion these charitable acts tacitly reveal the usurper's political sagacity. While he undoubtedly emphasizes the importance of the temple of Paśupatināth as a major religious establishment, he also makes certain to announce his generosity to Buddhist monasteries.

It is thus not improbable that the early Licchavis were more favourably inclined towards Buddhism. As powerfully organized establishments, the monasteries very likely played an important role in state politics, as did the churches in medieval Europe. It is significant that the other eminent religious organization of the period was that of the Pāśupatas, who may also have exercised considerable influence in contemporary society.[25] Moreover, the Pāśupatas were also organized into *saṅghas*, and in an area the size of the Bagmati valley, a conflict of interests between the Bauddhas and the Pāśupatas must have been inevitable. That there was animosity between them is further evident from a fifth century inscription of Anuparama, an avowed Śaiva, who appears quite intolerant of the laws of Sugata.[26]

One plausible surmise is that in his attempts to gain political power Aṁśuvarman was actively aided and supported by the temple of Paśupatināth. As soon as he deposed the Licchavi monarch Śivadeva and assumed absolute authority, unequivocally he declared his allegiance to Paśupatināth. At the same time, however, being an astute politician he kept the Buddhist community happy by making large grants to the important monasteries. It may be pointed out that centuries later both Sthitimalla and Yakṣamalla had to adopt drastic measures in order to restrain the powers of the religious establishments. Sthitimalla enacted laws whereby Buddhists in general, and the monks in particular, were brought within the folds of the caste-ridden Brāhmanical society.[27] From then on Newari Buddhist priests began to marry and thus was sounded the death-knell of the monastic system. Yakṣamalla curbed the power of the local brahmins who controlled the temple of Paśupatināth by dismissing them and brought over four families of brahmins from the south of the Vindhyas to officiate as priests.[28] It was further promulgated that these brahmins could not marry locally — a practice that is still followed today — obviously to discourage the political ambitions of local brahmin families.

IV

The prosperous condition of Buddhism in Licchavi Nepal is apparent from the above discussion. The monastery was the focal point of the religion and probably enjoyed special privileges in society. Generally, the monasteries were supported by both financial and land grants made by princes, merchants, and guilds. It is also evident that there were large congregations of both male and female monks. Hsüan-tsang's observation that there were both "Hīnayāna" and Mahāyāna monasteries in Nepal appears to be substantiated by epigraphical data. The name Madhyamavihāra very likely indicates that it was a foundation of the Madhyamikā sect of Buddhism. In more than one inscription we encounter the specific statement that the monks who were the recipients of particular grants belonged to the sect of *caturviṁśa* Mahāyāna.[29] One inscription at least informs us that the monks were of the Mahāsāṅghika sect, thereby clearly attesting to the prevalence of Śrāvakayāna Buddhism.

None of the extant vihāras in Nepal preserve buildings that survive from the Licchavi period. Usually a typical vihāra today consists of a group of buildings, two or three storeys high, enclosing a courtyard. The building opposite the main entrance generally serves as the temple, while the other buildings house the prayer hall, the library and the refectory. The well known Hiraṇyavarṇa mahāvihāra in Patan (also known as Kwa bahal) is probably the same vihāra that was founded by the Licchavi monarch Śivadeva II and named after him. The monastery was subsequently renamed Hiraṇyavarṇa or Golden Monastery, perhaps after it had been renovated and encased in gilt plaques by King Rudradeva.

Generally, both for religious and secular architecture in Nepal, the buildings are erected principally with brick and wood. The wooden portions influence the design considerably and give the buildings their characteristic form. Although no existing structure can be dated back to the Licchavi period, it would be a fair assumption to state that Malla architecture continues the basic tradition that evolved in Licchavi Nepal. There are reasons to believe, however, that imposing stone temples, following north Indian architectural styles, were also popular in Licchavi Nepal. Sufficient remnants, such as the magnificent pillar outside Bhadgaon (Figs. 3, 4), stand as eloquent testimony of the lithic architecture of the Licchavi period. But by and large the descriptions included in Chinese historical literature indicate the general popularity of the wooden mode of construction.

One of the Chinese sources has the following description of a palace that could be applied equally well to a temple:

"In the middle of the palace there is a tower of seven storeys roofed with copper tiles. Its balustrades, grilles, columns, beams, and everything therein are set with fine and even precious stones. At each of the four corners of the tower there projects a waterpipe of copper. At the base there are golden dragons which spout forth water. From the summit of the tower water is poured through funnels which finds its way down below, streaming like a fountain from the mouth of the golden makara."[30]

Even if parts of the description are hyperbolic, one can visualize the form of architecture quite vividly. More informative, as well as relevant, is Hsüan-tsang's general description of monasteries in India. "The *saṅghārāmas*", he tells us in the *Si-yu-ki*, "are constructed with extraordinary skill. A three-storied tower is erected at each of the four angles. The beams and projecting heads are carved with great skill in different shapes. The doors, windows, and the low walls are painted profusely. The monk's cells are ornamental on the inside and plain on the outside. In the very middle of the building is the hall, high and wide. There are various storeyed chambers and turrets of different height and shape, without any fixed rule."[31]

With slight modifications the above description may well be applied to such a vihāra as the golden monastery in Patan.

I have already mentioned that as Nepal is a land of persistent traditions one need not be astonished at discovering the tenacity of styles and forms for centuries. This may be easily demonstrated by comparing an eleventh century manuscript illumination and a section of what may be a seventeenth century structure. The illumination shows us a part of a vihāra (Fig. 5) with monks in the courtyard and verandah. The view of a disintegrating structure forming part of a monastery in Kirtipur (Fig. 6) bears an uncanny likeness to the painted building in the illumination. It seems reasonable to assume, therefore, that the early eleventh century illumination provides us with a reasonable facsimile of a monastery of the Licchavi period.

Licchavi Caitya

V

The stūpa or the caitya has remained a symbol *par excellence* of Buddhism in Nepal. Certainly the skyline of the Bagmati valley is dominated by the glittering spire of the great stūpa of Svayambhūnāth. But as one walks the ancient, narrow streets of Kathmandu and Patan, it is difficult not to notice the countless caityas that adorn unexpected squares and hidden courtyards, whether residential or monastic (Figs. 7, 8). Like the phallic emblems of Śiva, the caityas – on an average not much taller than three feet – appear like mushrooms and reveal a wide variety of forms and types.

A miniature caitya also known as a *dharmadhātu*, is erected for at least three purposes. Either it is the result of a simple act of piety, just as an icon is, or it is funerary and may contain the ashes or relics of a saintly person or a monk, or it is commemorative and is raised in the memory of a deceased person. These facts can be gleaned from some of the inscribed examples, most of which have been erected in recent centuries (Figs. 9, 10). Of the more ancient caityas some still enjoy a position of pre-eminence as they adorn courtyards of temples and are continually venerated (Figs. 11, 12). Others stand neglected and exposed to the elements on the roadside or near deserted shrines such as the impressive group at Cha bahil in Deo Patan (Figs. 9, 13-15, 17-19).

There are two basic types of early caityas in Nepal: the non-figurative and the figurative. The non-figurative type is represented by a distinguished group at Cha bahil in Deo Patan. It may be pointed out, however, that these are being characterized as "non-figurative" only because they are now without images in their niches. The most well known example of the figurative caityas is that standing in the courtyard of the Dhvaka baha at Kathmandu (Fig. 23). Locally such shrines are referred to as "Licchavi caitya", thereby associating them with the Licchavi period in Nepali history (ca. 400-850). Although all such edifices in the valley are not as old, certainly some of them can be considered to belong to the Licchavi period.

VI

The group of caityas at Cha bahil are among the most ornate of such shrines in the valley. All of them have richly embellished lower sections and a starkly simple hemispherical dome. It is obvious that although the form and the number of vertical divisions of each substructure differ considerably, the dome or the *aṇḍa* is of identical shape in most instances and admits of no ornamentation. In the two simpler caityas (Figs. 13, 14), the substructure supporting the dome is given a cruciform shape and rises in two receding stages. The projected middle section at each stage accommodates a niche. In the other both the cruciform and the circular plans are employed in different combinations (Figs. 17-19). The finial in each instance appears to be a later addition, although basically similar finials are known from manuscript illuminations of the eleventh century (Fig. 2).

Several other examples of this caitya type may be seen in temples and monasteries in Kathmandu and Patan (Figs. 11, 12, 20). Due to continuous worship and repainting, their forms and decorative schemes are often unrecognizable. Basically, however, they conform to the Cha bahil type of diminutive caityas, the *aṇḍa* being raised above a substructure of two or more stages and each stage being distinguished by a number of elaborately framed niches. Two fragmentary examples (Figs. 21, 22) were recently discovered when the foundations of the new Gana baha were being excavated in Kathmandu.

Indeed, the ornately framed niche seems to be the most prominent feature of such early caityas in Nepal. The sculptors have selected a wide variety of motives in multiple combinations for decorating the caityas. The principal motives are the *kīrttimukha*, which usually occupies the apex of the niche, miniature caityas, *kalahaṁsa*, *kinnara*, *makara*, lions and vegetable and geometric scrolls.

Curiously all the nichés in these early caityas are now gapingly empty. In later caityas usually the upper niches are occupied by figures of four Tathāgatas and the lower ones with those of the corresponding Bodhisattvas. While two of the Cha bahil caityas (Figs. 13, 14) could admit such an iconographic arrangement, the others certainly have more than eight nichés in their several stages. Only two alternatives therefore seem possible. The niches contained either identical effigies of the Buddha or miniature caityas. Besides, these caityas very likely belong to a period when the concept of the five Tathāgatas was yet to become popular.

One of the Cha bahil caityas bears an inscription written in the script of the Licchavi period. Another inscribed slab was discovered along with the Gana baha fragments (Fig. 20). It seems indubitable, therefore, that the caityas belong to the

Licchavi period. This is also corroborated by stylistic evidence of the decorative design. The *kinnaras* and the lions are remarkably similar to those seen in fifth century architectural fragments and pillars from Bhumara or Sarnath. The carving is equally crisp and articulated, and the designs are rendered with a great sense of style. Such elegantly exuberant carving is also characteristic of sixth-seventh century sculptures in India, particularly of the decorative friezes at Aihole and Nalanda. The beautifully rendered *kalahaṁsa* from the base of temple No. 2 at Nalanda, dated by common consensus to the sixth-seventh century (Fig. 16), is certainly comparable stylistically to the bird delineated on one of the Cha bahil caityas (Fig. 15). In my opinion, therefore, the Cha bahil Licchavi caityas, along with the fragmentary examples from the Gana baha site, can safely be assigned a sixth century date, if not earlier.

The closest Indian parallels for the Cha bahil caityas may be seen in the Gandhāra area. Although there is greater elaboration in the decorative scheme of the Nepali caityas, the general plan of a tiered substructure, embellished with pillared and arched niches, was commonly employed at Gandhāra. The circular caitya at Cha bahil (Fig. 17) is especially similar to that standing in cell number nine at Mora Moradu.[32] This site has been dated by Marshall to the second century but because of the greater elaboration of the Nepali examples I have postulated a later date for them. It may be stressed further that in all such stūpas in Gandhāra the niches are occupied invariably by images of the Buddha.

VII

Of the second or figurative type of Licchavi caityas that at Dhvaka baha (Fig. 23) is not only one of the most complete examples, but also the most important from the point of view of art history. I will, therefore, discuss it at length and attempt to establish its firm chronological position.

Although the caitya is monolithic rather than built structurally, it is essentially architectural in concept. With four prominent niches on the four cardinal sides the edifice appears more as a shrine than a stūpa. The hemispherical section or the *aṇḍa* serves as a crowning member at the summit and hardly retains its earlier significance. Obviously greater importance is attached to the images enshrined within the niches than the caitya itself.

The ground plan of the caitya is a simple square and a plain socle supports the weight of the entire edifice. Vertically the caitya consists of a tall shaft containing large niches, a middle section with smaller niches and the dome with the crowning finials. Each niche on the shaft is deeply hollowed and is arched at the top. Along each edge of the shaft is a pilaster handsomely embellished with floral decorations. Two confronted brackets, imitating wooden forms and apparently serving no functional purpose, spring from the capital of the pilasters. Immediately above are two alternating rows of dentils, which also are survivals of the wooden mode of construction and are now employed purely as decorative elements. Next follows a wide band, like a moulding, embellished with rosettes and vegetal scrolls about which more will be said presently.

The smaller niches of the middle section of the caitya are more elaborately framed. The frame consists of what may be regarded as swirling whiskers or tongues of the *Kīrttimukha* that adorns the apex of the niche. Heraldic lions sit at each corner adding a sense of regal grandeur to the entire monument. Above is the plain hemispherical dome of the caitya with finials that appear to be later restorations.

There seems to be no parallel for such an edifice in India, although numerous votive stūpas with niches containing Buddha images are known, even as early as the art of Gandhāra, Amaravati, and Mathura of the Kuṣāṇa period. In miniature stūpas of the later period as well we find representations only of the Buddha, either placed in shallow niches or projecting from the drum. But rarely, if at all, in Indian stūpas are the Bodhisattvas accorded the same prominence as the Buddha. Even within Nepal the Dhvaka baha caitya appears to be unique in the sense that in none of the others (Figs. 29-36) is the niche concept maintained for the standing figures. In this respect the caitya bears greater resemblance to some of the smaller shrines in Nalanda which have no sanctum chamber but are provided with four niches on the four cardinal sides.

Such edifices are known in Indian literature as *sarvatobhadra*, which implies that the structure has four shrines on the cardinal sides. This type of shrine was particularly popular among the Jainas and is also known as *caumukha*, meaning "with four faces".[33] The great Buddhist temple at Paharpur is a *sarvatobhadra* type of structure and many of the Buddhist monuments in the Prambanan valley in Java and at Pagan in Burma also follow this basic plan. The design is particularly suited to accommodate a concept of four or five deities as would be required by that of the five Tathāgatas of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

VIII

Of the four standing figures within the larger niches, two represent Bodhisattvas and the other two Tathāgatas (Figs. 25-28). The Bodhisattvas are clad in *dhotis*, wear sacred threads, and are ornamented. The ornaments include bangles, armlets of serpent design, a wide necklace, ear-rings, and a crown. One of the Bodhisattvas (Fig. 25) holds with his left hand a full-blown lotus by its thick stalk, while his right hand makes the gesture of munificence. There seems little doubt that the male is a representation of the Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi or Avalokiteśvara in his classic form.

The second Bodhisattva, (Fig. 26) similarly attired and crowned, has a dwarf attendant on his left. The attendant stands with his arms folded across the chest in a gesture known as *vinayahasta*, symbolizing humility. The Bodhisattva's left hand seems to grasp the top knot of the dwarf's head, but in effect, the object is the emerging prong of a thunderbolt (*vajra*). This may be confirmed by several other images from Nepal. In a stele at Patan (Fig. 62) Padmapāṇi stands on the Buddha's right, while Vajrapāṇi with the dwarf is on the Master's left. The emergent prong of the thunderbolt is also quite clearly visible in two other bronze representations of the Bodhisattva (Figs. 76, 77).

Thus, while the identification of the Bodhisattvas is certain, the inclusion of the two images of the Buddha seems more difficult to explain. The only difference between the two Buddhas appears to be in the design of their drapery. In one (Fig. 27) the drapery is plain and transparent, as in Sarnath Buddhas, while in the other (Fig. 28) the folds of the drapery are indicated by parallel striations in the Mathura fashion. The difference, however, is of a stylistic rather than of an iconographic nature to warrant any positive identification. On the other hand, it seems difficult to comprehend why two images of the Buddha should be included when the Bodhisattvas are two distinct personalities.

If we turn to the Licchavi caitya at Naga baha (Figs. 29-32) the four figures may without question be identified as the Bodhisattvas Padmapāṇi and Vajrapāṇi, the Buddha Śākyamuni, and the future Buddha, Maitreya. Vajrapāṇi holds the conventional *vajra*, while Maitreya is represented as an ascetic Bodhisattva carrying the vase of immortality. In later versions of such caityas as well these four figures are repeated in most instances, and therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that of the two Tathāgatas in the Dhvaka baha caitya one may be regarded as Maitreya. Maitreya is the only personality in the Buddhist pantheon who may be represented either as a Bodhisattva or as a Buddha; thus, the assumption in respect to the Dhvaka baha shrine may not be very far fetched.

The four seated figures within the four smaller niches are all alike (Fig. 24). Each is seated in the classical posture of a yogī and each has his hands on his lap in the gesture of meditation (*samādhimudrā*). This is at once reminiscent of four identical Tathāgatas that normally adorn the miniature stūpas in Gandhāra and Mathura of the Kuṣāṇa period. Had they shown different gestures they may have represented four of the five Tathāgatas of the Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna pantheon. But as all four display the same gesture, it seems more appropriate to suggest that they portray four aspects of the Transcendental Buddha, as accepted by the Lokattaravādins and the later Mahayānists.

Thus, the symbolic significance of the caitya may be summed up as follows. On a vertical axis the three zones of the caitya may represent the three *dhātus* of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The *kāmadhātu* or the world of desire is represented by the lower section where we find the historical Buddha, Śākyamuni, the future Buddha, Maitreya, and the two guardian Bodhisattvas, Padmapāṇi and Vajrapāṇi. The middle section very likely corresponds to the *rūpadhātu* or the world of form, symbolized by the Transcendental Buddhas. Finally, the dome and the crowning elements would then correspond to the *arūpadhātu* or the world of formlessness. It may be pointed out that in Buddhist texts usually followed in Nepal the caitya or stūpa itself is regarded as a *dharmadhātu*. The Dhvaka baha Licchavi caitya, therefore, is an ostensible symbol of the quintessence of the Mahāyāna system rather than of the later Vajrayāna.

Apart from the Dhvaka baha and the Naga baha caityas, two others are of considerable interest and may claim some antiquity. One of these is in the Cha bahil at Deo Patan and the other stands in the courtyard of the Tham bahil in Kathmandu (Figs. 33-35). In each of these instances only four figures of the Buddha are carved in bold relief, and the gestures of the hands do not correspond to the distinct gestures given to the five Tathāgatas of the Vajrayāna pantheon. Rather, the Tathāgatas on these two caityas display only two gestures, either the *varada* or the *abhaya*. Once again, therefore, it is my contention that both monuments are affiliated to the Mahāyāna form of Buddhism rather than the more esoteric Vajrayāna, and very likely the four Tathāgatas here symbolize the Buddhas of direction or aspects of the Transcendental Buddha, as those in the middle section of the Dhvaka baha caitya. There is a third such caitya at Svayambhūnāth (Fig. 36) which is somewhat enigmatic as I shall discuss later.

IX

More than for its iconographic interest the Dhvaka baha caitya remains a monument of great significance for the art history of Nepal. In first publishing a section of it in 1964 Stella Kramrisch suggested it to be a work of the seventh century.[34] I will now outline the various steps by which I have established that Kramrisch's suggested date seems on the whole to be accurate.

The socle of the Dhvaka baha caitya contains one line of inscription simply giving the Buddhist creed. The inscription is written in the script prevalent in Licchavi Nepal and familiar from a large number of other epigraphs. A careful study of the paleography seems to establish its similarity with other epigraphs which may with certainty be assigned to the seventh century. However, since the script is known to survive with little substantial change late into the eighth, I will ignore the paleographic evidence for the present and try to establish the date of the caitya by stylistic comparisons.

Within Nepal firmly datable sculptures are rare. A group of sculptures, however, may with reasonable certainty be attributed to the first half of the seventh century and of these the most well known is the supine Viṣṇu at Budhanilkanth. But since the subject matter of the Dhvaka baha caitya is Buddhist, I will compare the caitya with other related Buddhist material, both from Nepal and India.

In a typical bathing fountain, not far from the recently reconstructed Gana baha and close to the jail in Kathmandu, stands an image of the Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi (Fig. 37). Very likely this is the same sculpture that is mentioned in a dedicatory inscription carved on a pedestal, now separated from the figure. The inscribed pedestal presently carries a much mutilated image of the Buddha (Fig. 49). The inscription states that when Rāmadeva was the king of Nepal an icon of Āryāvalokiteśvara was consecrated by Maṇigupta and his wife, Mahendramatī.[35] It appears that the spot where these two sculptures stand, together with the adjoining areas of the modern Gana baha, is an important archaeological site. The older monastery was destroyed in the nineteenth century and perhaps this is when the Padmapāṇi and the Buddha images were mutilated. The Buddha image was replaced on the inscribed pedestal, no doubt unwittingly by the same devotee who attempted to repair it in cement plaster with tragic consequences. It is interesting to note that while the foundations for the present Gana baha were being laid in 1966 two tiny bronze figures of the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi and the Buddha (Fig. 40) were discovered in an urn containing a large number of coins of Aṁśuvarman (the first quarter of the seventh century).[36]

From the datable epigraphs it can be firmly established that Rāmadeva was ruling in Nepal around A.D. 550. Thus, assuming that the Gana baha Padmapāṇi is the sculpture referred to in the inscription, a mid-sixth century date for it seems assured. This date can be further corroborated by a comparison with at least three other sculptures in Nepal - namely the Cha bahil Buddha (Fig. 48), the Bangemura Buddha (Fig. 50), and the Buddha triad at Chapatol in Patan (Fig. 56), which is placed on an inscribed pedestal of the sixth century.[37] All three sculptures may indisputably be considered as works of the sixth century.

Stylistically, the Gana baha Padmapāṇi is closely related to two Bodhisattvas from Sarnath, now in the National Museum, New Delhi (Figs. 38, 39). All three figures are characterized by rather thickset bodies with heavy proportions. Indeed, compared to the Sarnath figures, the Nepali Bodhisattva appears somewhat more attenuated. The Nepali figure is also more richly ornamented, although details of drapery are essayed as light etchings. Rather similar is the treatment of the lotus in both Padmapāṇi images. While the foliage below the left arm is rendered with exuberant flourish, the full blown lotus faces the Bodhisattva in both steles. It may be mentioned, however, that usually Sarnath Bodhisattvas of the late fifth century are far more elongated and hence are characterized by greater linear elegance. These two Bodhisattvas, therefore, may well belong to the first quarter of the fifth century. Apart from these two Sarnath figures, the Nepali Padmapani, in terms of its heavier proportions and emphasis on volumetric modelling, is closer stylistically to contemporary Bodhisattvas from Sanchi, a point that will be emphasized later.

X

Other than the Gana baha Padmapāṇi, few Buddhist sculptures can be given a pre tenth century date with any certainty. An architectural fragment showing kneeling devotees and now in the National Museum (Fig. 84) bears an inscription of about the sixth century. Two others are both inscribed bronzes and represent the Buddha. One of these is now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the paleography of the inscription around the base suggests a date not later than the ninth century (Fig. 55).[38]

There is another Buddhist sculpture in Patan associated closely with an inscription which is of crucial importance to our study. This is the impressive image of Padmapaṇi standing within an unpretentious shrine in an area known as the Yangu baha tol (Fig.41). The inscription, incised on a separate pedestal, states that an image of Avalokiteśvara was consecrated in the year 180 during the reign of Mānadeva. According to Regmi[39], who has read and published the inscription, the script is the same as that of the Licchavi period. He, therefore, considers the king to be a Licchavi of the eighth century which is also his suggested date for the sculpture.

It seems difficult to accept an eighth century date for the Yangu baha Padmapāṇi for various reasons. This will become at once apparent if we compare the sculpture with the two dated eleventh century Surya images at Patan (Figs. 42, 43). Both the Sūryas and Padmapāṇi obviously reflect the application of the same canon of proportions with a distinct penchant for slim figures. The modelling of all three figures is very similar with a strong emphasis on the sharply defined outline rather than on the volume. A number of details also are so identical in the three sculptures that they must be regarded as the works of the same period. The folds of the *dhoti* between the legs are treated in a similarly fussy manner and the delineation of the sash along the thighs is identical in all three sculptures. The ornaments are of the same variety except for the armlets and all three principal figures are adorned with spur-like appendages (śaṅkapatra) behind the ears. In addition, the decorations along the edge of the aureole and the nimbus are even more flamboyant in the Yangu baha sculpture than in the two Sūrya steles.

If we now compare the Padmapāṇi with similar works from eastern India, it becomes clear that it is much more closely related to eleventh century sculptures (Fig. 44) than to those of the eighth or the ninth century. The penchant for slim attenuated figures with an obvious emphasis on linear rather than volumetric modelling is a definite characteristic of eleventh century Pāla sculptures. Thus, both on internal and external evidence, the eleventh rather than the eighth century seems a more convincing date for the Yangu baha Padmapāṇi.

If the above conclusion is accepted, it remains for me to explain the presence of the inscription. If indeed the inscription, occurring on a separate pedestal, is written indubitably in Gupta characters — and we definitely know the script had evolved considerably in the eleventh — then it must be admitted that the pedestal and the sculpture do not belong together. The inscription may very well refer to an original donation of the eighth century, whereas the sculpture may have been a replacement of the eleventh. This remains a strong possibility in Nepal where other such instances of substitution have occurred. The second alternative is that the inscription and the sculpture are contemporary, in which case the year 180, when referred to the Newari era, would correspond to A.D 1060. Stylistically, this seems to be the ideal date for the Yangu baha Padmapāṇi. The Gupta script — if indeed it is unquestionably Gupta — may in that case be considered a freak and archaistic survival, which is also not an improbability, particularly in Nepal. Mānadeva in that case may be regarded as the same king who ruled about this time according to two of the *Vaṁśāvalīs*.[40] I am, however, inclined to consider the first alternative as the more probable one.

XI

Thus, if an eleventh century date is established for the Yangu baha Padmapāṇi, it seems eminently reasonable to suggest that the Dhvaka baha caitya must be considered an earlier work. On the other hand, on stylistic considerations it must be placed later than the Gana baha Padmapāṇi of the mid-sixth century. However, a period of about five hundred years separate the Yangu baha and the Gana baha Padmapāṇis. Further comparisons, therefore, may help us to suggest a more precise date for the Dhvaka baha caitya.

Even if we ignored the evidence of the Yangu baha Padmapāṇi, a comparison with the two dated Sūrya images (Figs. 42, 43) clearly establishes that the Dhvaka baha caitya is an earlier work. The figure of Padmapāṇi has a far more spontaneous quality about it than the more mannered representations of Sūrya's attendants, despite the fact that the same conceptual stereotype has been employed for all three figures. The attendant figures are stiff and stylized and betray inconsequential attempts at differentiating the modelled surfaces. The legs particularly appear columnar, and in general, the figures seem merely to conform to a formula without revealing any creative impulse. In contrast, the Dhvaka baha figures, particularly the Bodhisattvas, manifest a much better realization of the plastic mass. The proportions of the limbs are more harmonious and the modelling full and lively, whereas in the eleventh century figures the greater attenuation has resulted in a more summary modelling. Indeed, as opposed to the manneristic qualities of the eleventh century sculptures, the figures in the Dhvaka baha caitya are informed with a vitality and elegance indicative of a vigorous and creative tradition. The gap can be narrowed further by a comparison of the seated Buddha figures in the Dhvaka baha caitya and the Los Angeles bronze of the ninth century (Fig. 55). Unquestionably the Dhvaka baha Buddhas would appear to be the precursors of the Los Angeles bronze.

If we now compare the Dhvaka baha Padmapāṇi with that at Gana baha, it is manifestly clear that whereas the sixth century sculptor is somewhat hesitant in his interpretation of the Indian models, the sculptor of the former figure is evidently more self-assured. Rather than the Gana baha Padmapāṇi, the example at Dhvaka baha is more expressive of a "Nepali" style where the borrowed elements from India have been assimilated and re-interpreted in terms of the local aesthetic intent. The Dhvaka baha Padmapāṇi is as derivative of as it is distinct from its Gupta prototype as are the Nalanda Bodhisattvas of the seventh-eighth century from similar models.

The period of one hundred and fifty years from the reign of Aṁśuvarman (ca. 600 621) until the end of Javadeva's rule (ca. 750) appears to have been one of unprecedented political strength and stability for Nepal. The first four decades of the seventh century were dominated by the personalities of Aṁśuvarman and the two Gupta regents, Jiṣṇugupta and Viṣṇugupta. Thereafter, Narendradeva, Sivadeva II and Javadeva II, three powerful Licchavis, ruled undisturbed for almost a century. It was at this time also that Nepal was regarded as a significant power in pan Indian politics and both Śivadeva and Javadeva contracted matrimonial alliances with such important Indian dynasties as the Maukharis of Kanauj.

For the history of Nepali sculpture the seventh century, particularly the first half, is especially significant. Such monumental sculptures as the Budhanilkanth Jalaśayana, the Dhumvarahi Varāha, or the portrait sculpture of Viṣṇugupta at Paśupatināth, reveal a sense of self assurance and inventiveness on the part of Nepali sculptors rarely matched again in the history of the country. That Nepali architecture also blossomed forth in this period is evident not only from Aṁśuvarman's inscription, where it is stated that curious crowds gazed in amazement at the newly built royal palace, but also from the glowing accounts of observant Chinese visitors. And, finally, Jayadeva's Paśupatināth inscription itself illustrates both the facility and the love of the court for Sanskrit poetry. The king himself was an accomplished poet.

This then appears to be the ambience in which the Dhvaka baha caitya was created. Although not as large as the Budhanilkanth Jalavaśayana, the figures on the caitya reveal the same sense of monumental grandeur. A similar mastery of the material and the same deft and accomplished handling of the chisel are evident in the seventh century Vaiṣṇava sculptures, as well as in the Dhvaka baha caitya. It would be difficult, therefore, not to regard the Dhvaka baha caitya as a work of the same aesthetic vision that created these other masterpieces of seventh century Nepali sculpture.

XII

I have already pointed out that iconographically the Dhvaka baha shrine seems to reflect Mahāyāna rather than the more complex Vajrayāna ideology. Although Chinese annals, apparently of the T'ang period, record that the five Jinas were venerated in Nepal, it is unlikely that the cult of the five Tathāgatas was widespread at that time. This seems also to be confirmed by archaeological evidence, for in none of the so called Licchavi caityas do we find the representation of the five Tathāgatas. And I have previously discussed the seventh century inscription at Patan where only Akṣobhya and Amitābha are included.

It is significant that virtually no Nepali sculpture that portrays Tantrayāna or Vajrayāna themes can be dated earlier than the tenth century. Rather, Buddhist iconography prior to the tenth century seems to reflect a more simple pantheon dominated by Tathāgatas and the Bodhisattvas. One of the earliest documents to illustrate Vajrayāna deities is the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript of A.D. 1015 now in the Asiatic Society at Calcutta. Relevant also is the fact that all extant manuscripts of important Vajrayāna texts, such as the *Sādhanamālā*, the *Kriyāsamgrahapañjika* of Kuladatta, the *Niṣpannayogāvali*, etc., date back only to the eleventh century.

One iconographical feature that strongly indicates an early date for the Dhvaka baha shrine is the manner of personifying the attribute of Vajrapāṇi. In India the attributes were freely anthropomorphised during the Gupta period but later the practice was virtually discontinued. More frequently, however, the attributes of the Brāhmanical gods were personified rather than those of the Buddhist deities.

One of the clearest instances of the personification of the attribute "vajra" occurs in a panel at Kanheri (Fig. 75). In the lower section of a relief Indra and Pañcasikha with his harp are seated in conversation at the feet of the Buddha. Behind the crowned Indra is a dwarf with his arms folded across his chest and the prongs of the thunderbolt protruding from his head.

In cave 4 at Ellora on either side of the sanctum (on the lower level) stand two impressive guardian (*dvārapāla*) Bodhisattvas. One of them (Fig. 73) has a male attendant on his left striking what appears as a militant posture with his arms folded across his chest. Here again one can clearly see the prongs of the thunderbolt emerging from his head. Unquestionably the Bodhisattva is Vajrapāṇi. A number of other Bodhisattvas at Ellora have dwarf attendants, but nowhere else is the identification so emphatic as with the figure in cave 4. By common consensus of scholars, this cave is dated to the first half of the seventh century.

Such a male dwarf attendant for a Bodhisattva is rarely seen in the Buddhist art of north India. The fifth century sculpture from Sarnath, therefore, assumes particular significance (Fig. 39), for here we see a Bodhisattva standing in a relaxed manner with a dwarf attendant. The Bodhisattva's right hand seems to be placed on a rest but the attribute in the left hand is not discernible. The dwarf, however, has his hands crossed in front of his chest and above his forehead is clearly marked the symbol of a diamond. In addition, the Bodhisattva's matted hair is adorned with a coronet which appears to be a distinguishing feature of Vajrapāṇi.

All these examples discussed above must be dated no later than the seventh century. In later Buddhist art I know of only one instance where the attribute has been personified. This occurs in an image of Mañjuśri from Nalanda which may be dated to the ninth century.[41] The Bodhisattva's left hand

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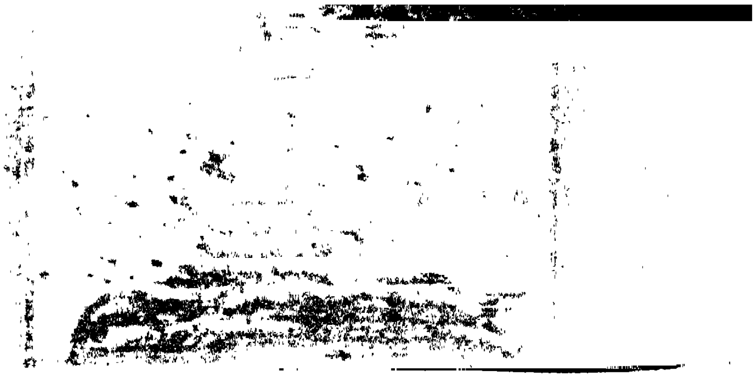

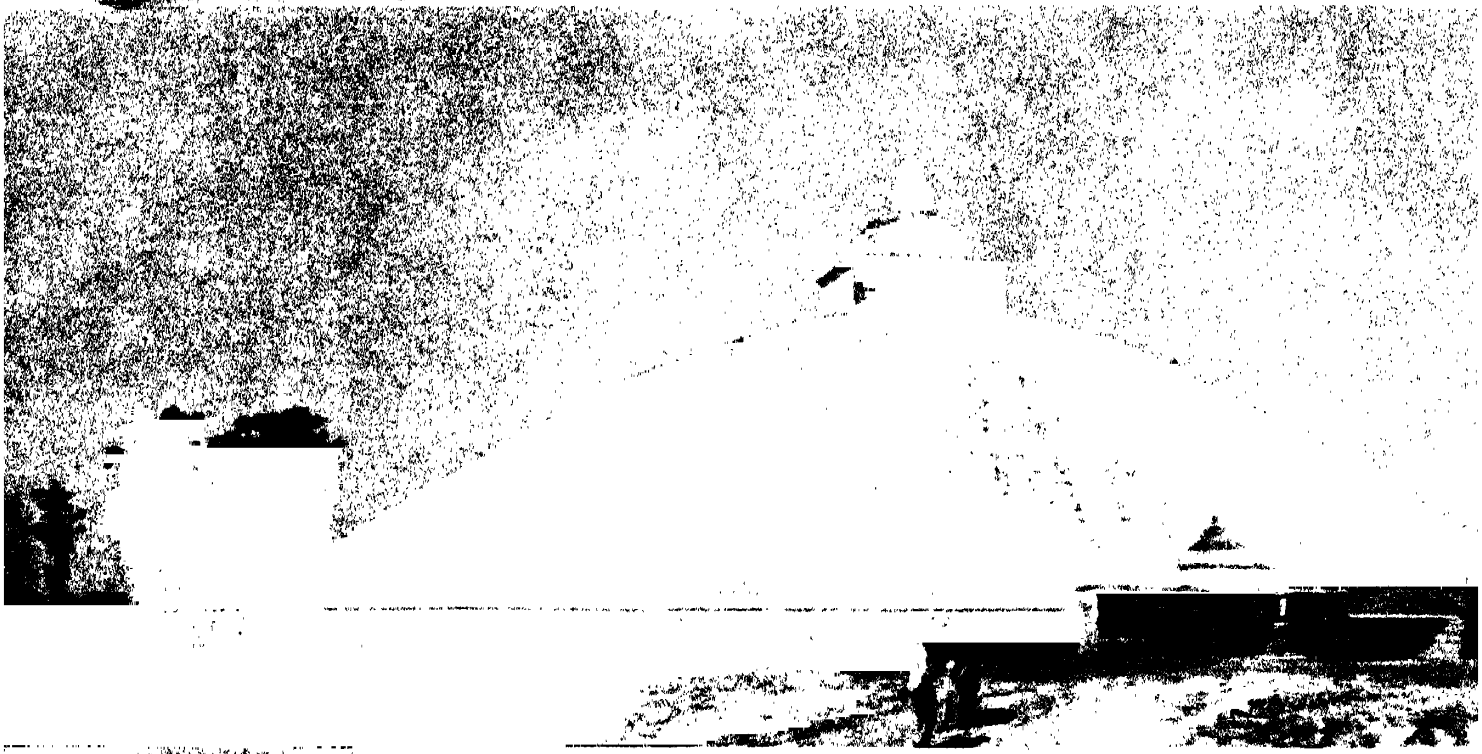

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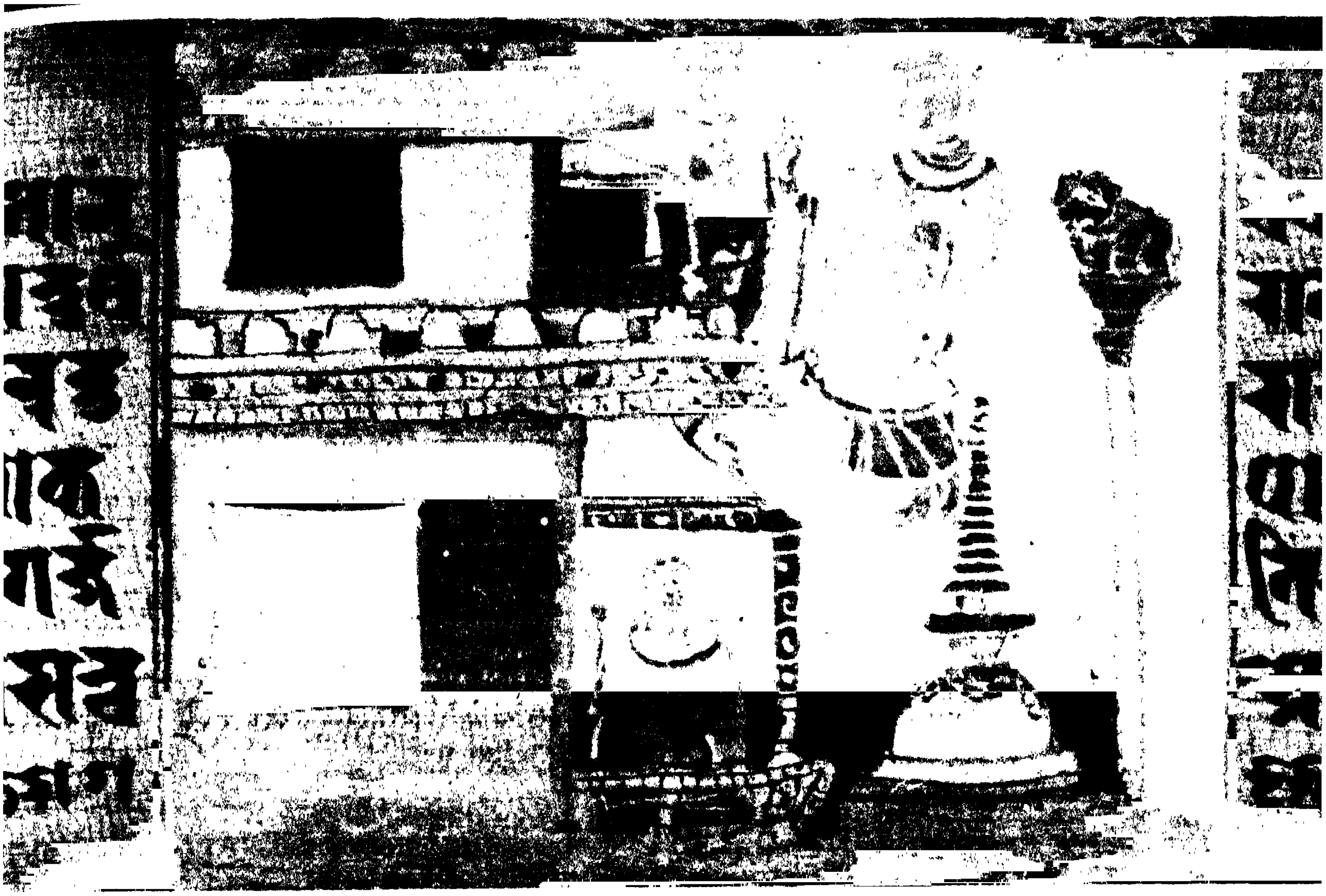
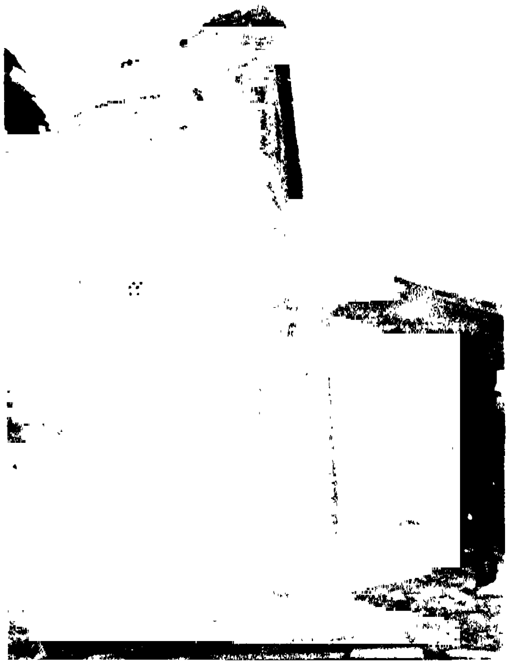
1 *"Aśokan" stūpa, East Patan*
2 *Eleventh century Manuscript Illumin tion showing Svayambhū caitya Th Asiatic Society*
3 *Pillar, Chuping ghat, Bhadgaon, 7 century*
4 *Detail of Fig 3*



5 *Eleventh century Manuscript Illumination showing a section of a vihara, The Asiatic Society*
6 *Section of a Monastery, Kirtipur*
7 *Courtyard of a Temple in Kathmandu showing caityas*
8 *Courtyard of Svayambhūnāth showing caityas*



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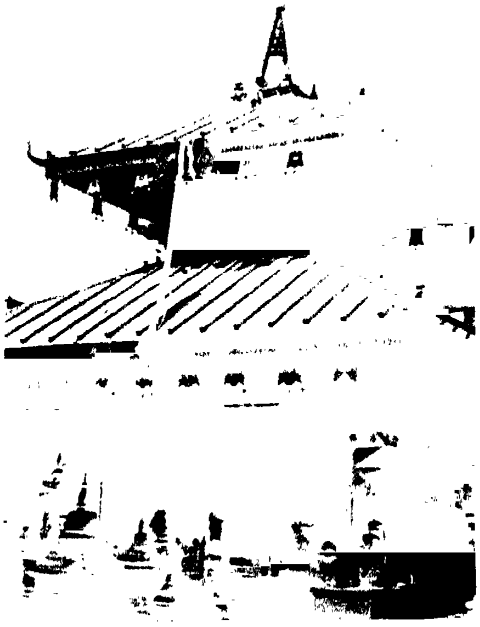

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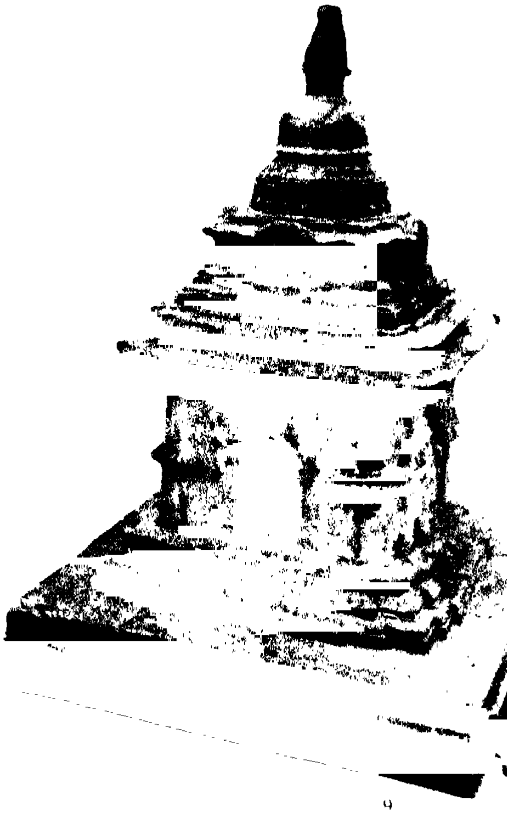
9 *Commemorative caitya, Cha bahil, Deo Patan*
10 *Commemorative caitya, Cha bahil*
11 *Licchavi caitya, Patan*
12 *Licchavi caitya, Patan*
13 *Licchavi caitya, Cha bahil*



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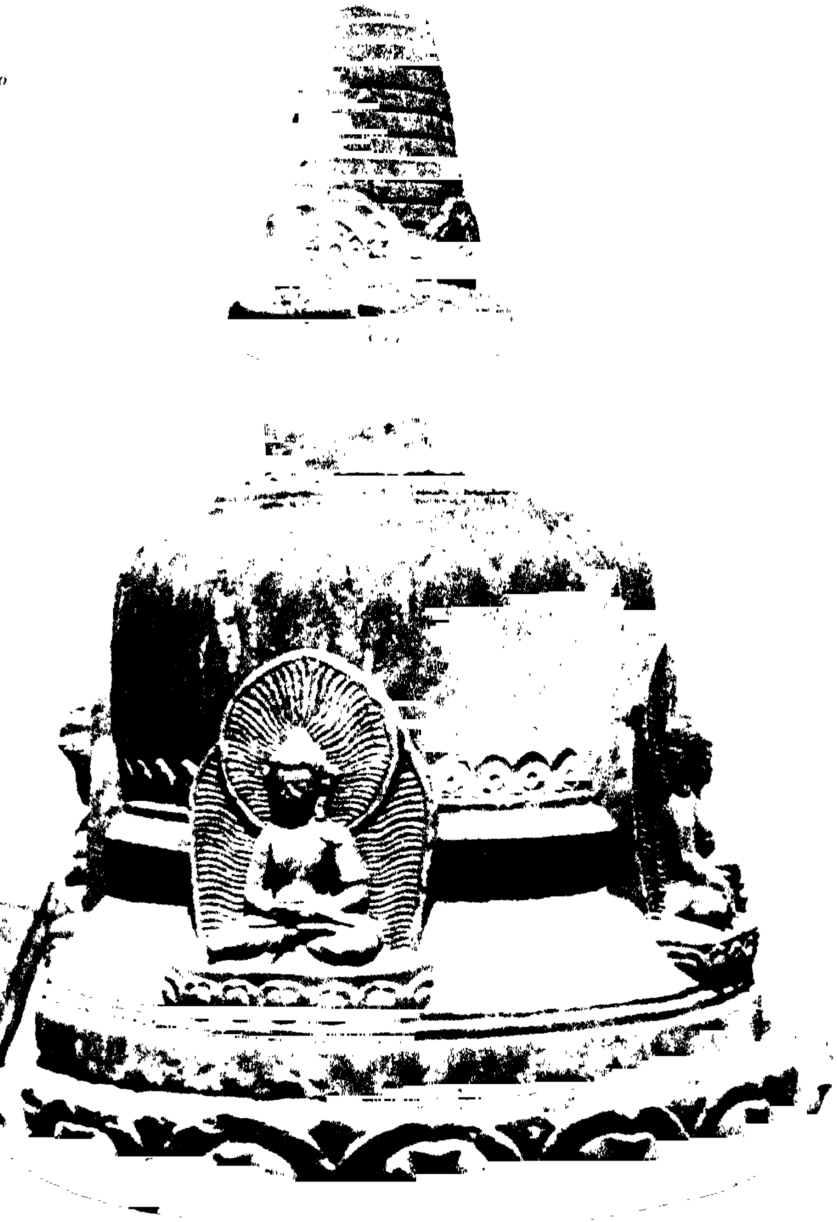

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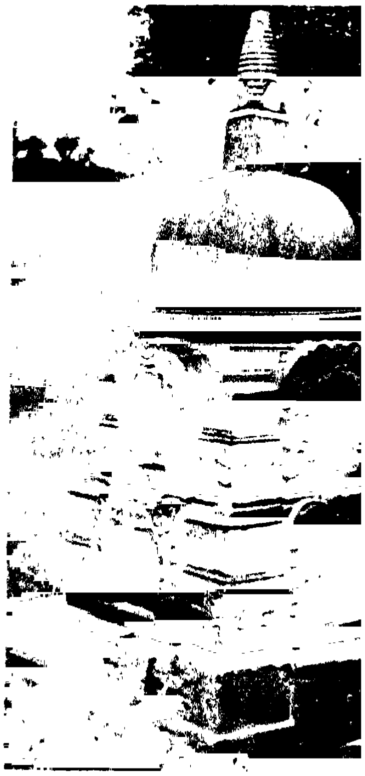

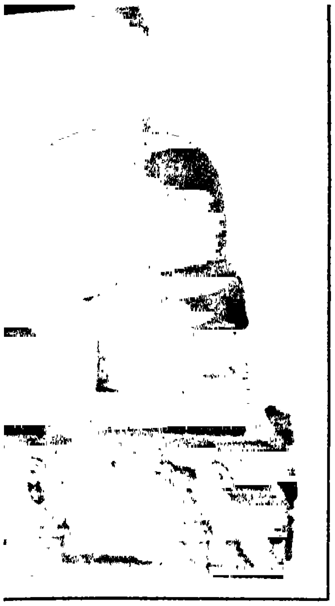
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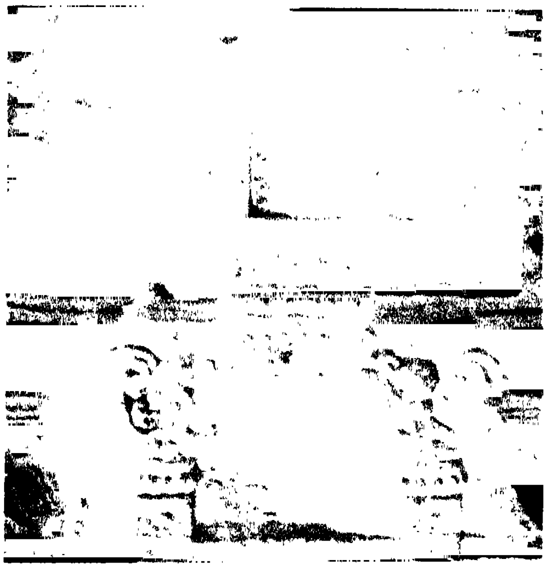
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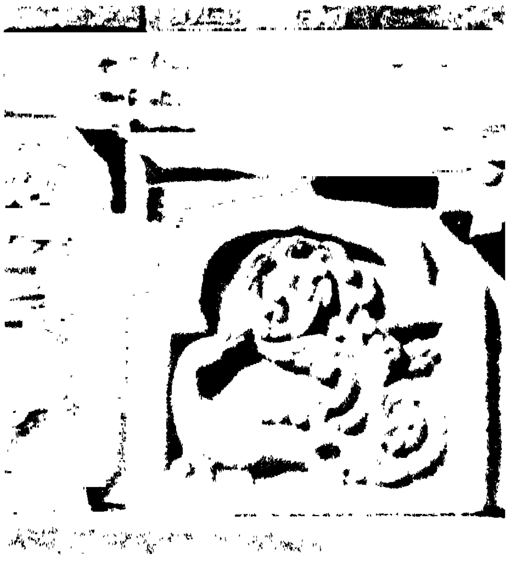
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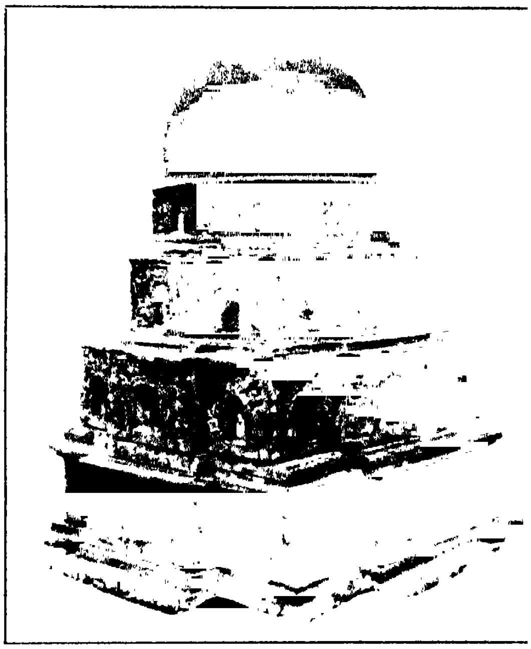

4 Licchavi caitya, Cha bahil
5 Detail of Fig. 14
6 Kalahaṁsa, Temple no 2, Nalanda (India), 6th-7th century
7 Licchavi caitya, Cha bahil
8 Licchavi caitya, Cha bahil
9 Licchavi caitya, Cha bahil
0 Licchavi caitya, Patan
1 Licchavi caitya, Gana baha, Kathmandu
2 Fragments of a Licchavi caitya, Gana baha

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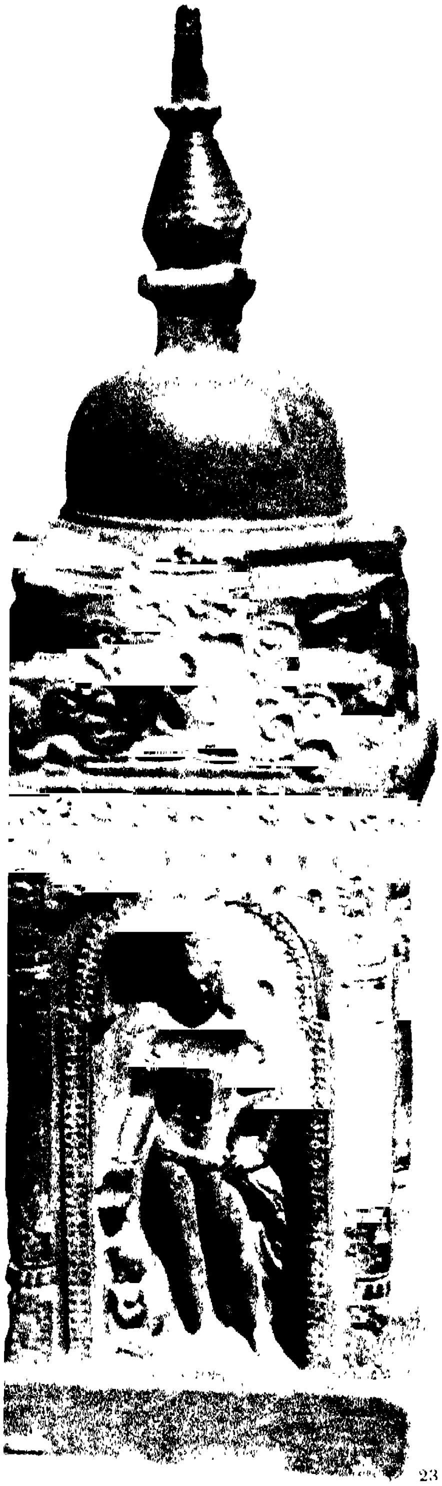
23 *Licchavi caitya, Dhvaka baha, Kathmandu*
24 *Detail of Fig. 23 showing seated Tathagata*
25 *Padmapani, Dhvaka baha caitya*
26 *Vajrapani, Dhvaka baha caitya*
27 *Śakyamuni, Dhvaka baha caitya*
28 *Maitreya(?), Dhvaka baha caitya*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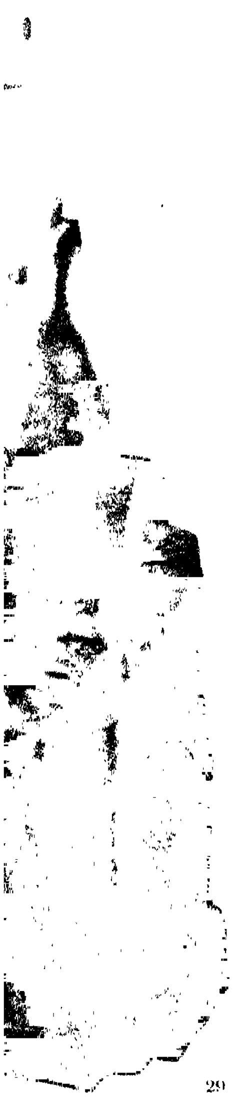

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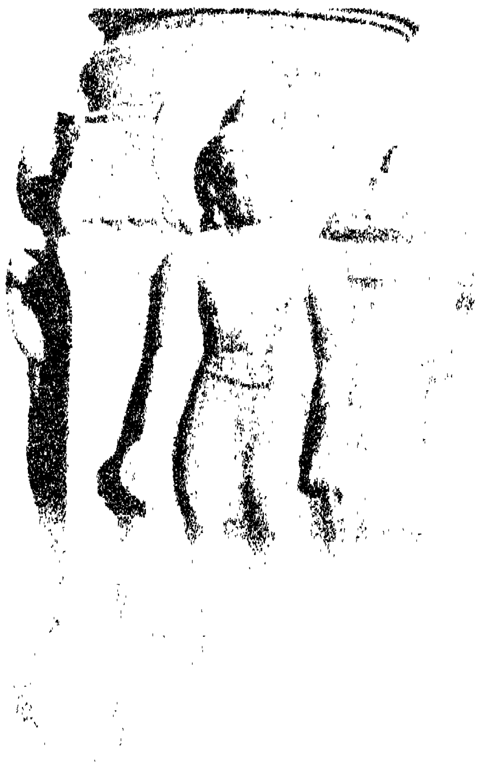

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29 Licchavi caitya, Naga baha, Paṭan
30 Śākyamuni, Naga baha caitya
31 Maitreya, Naga baha caitya
32 Vajrapāṇi, Naga baha caitya
33 Licchavi caitya, Cha bahil
34 Licchavi caitya, Tham bahil, Kathmandu
35 Another view of Fig. 34

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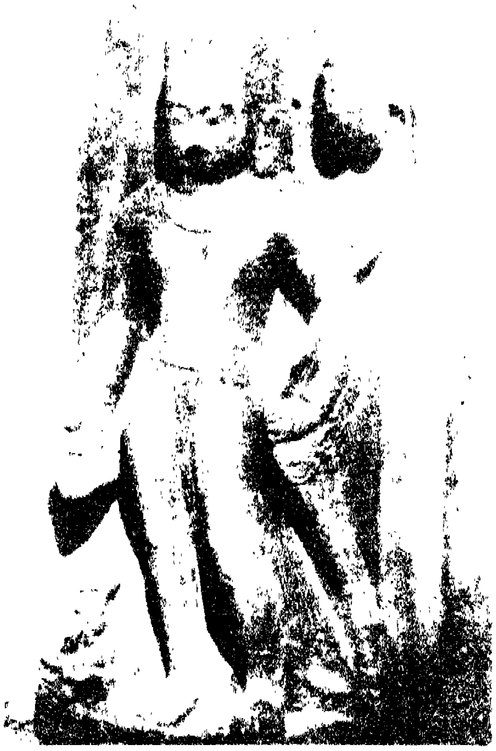

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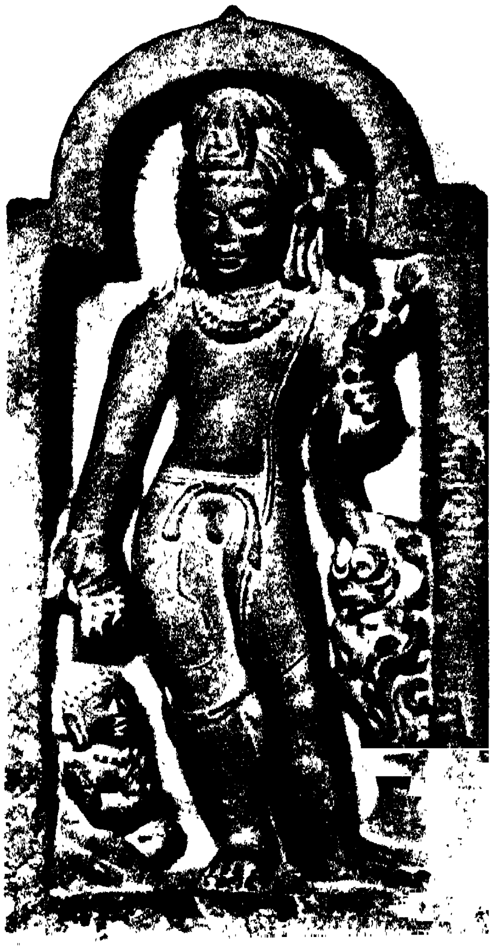

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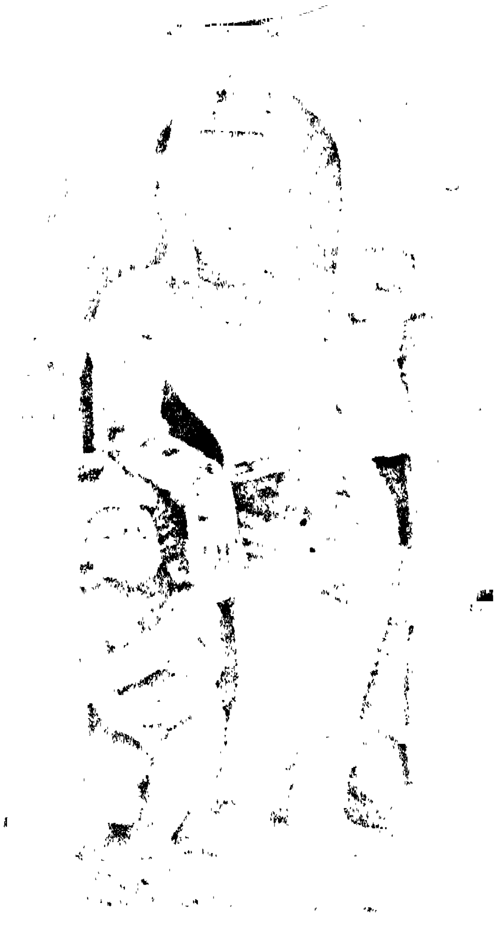

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36 *Licchavi caitya, Svayambhūnāth*
37 *Padmapaṇi, Gana baha, A.D. 550*
38 *Padmapaṇi, Sarnath (India), 5th century*
39 *Vajrapaṇi, Sarnath 5th century*
40 *Buddha and Vajrapaṇi, Gana baha, 7th 8th century*
41 *Padmapāṇi, Yangu bahatol, Patan, 11th century (?)*
42 *Sūrya, Thapahiti, Patan, A.D. 1065*

(Continued from Page 11)

grasps the flower stalk that seems to emerge from the dwarf's head. Since the flower on which the manuscript rests is a lotus, very likely the dwarf here represents Padmapuruṣa. However, generally the tradition of personifying the attribute was a common feature of Gupta art rather than of the later periods.

Thus, on iconographic evidence it may be stated positively that the Dhvaka baha caitya belongs to the pre-Vajrayāna period of Buddhism in Nepal, or in other words, it is a pre-tenth century work. In addition, it seems to belong to a transitional phase in the development of Mahāyāna iconography in the area, between the early stūpas of the fifth-sixth century and the more definite configuration of the Naga baha caitya. Moreover, the fact that the attribute of Vajrapāṇi is personified signals a date closer to the Gupta period.

XIII

A seventh century date for the shrine may also be corroborated by a comparison with related material in India. First of all in no way does any of the figures in the Dhvaka baha caitya reflect an awareness of Bihar sculpture of the early Pāla period (Fig. 45). The standing Tathāgatas are stylistically more akin to a Sarnath Buddha of the seventh century (Fig. 46), while the Bodhisattvas reveal the same sense of volume as a seventh century Bihar sculpture (Fig. 47).

Close parallels for the Dhvaka baha Bodhisattva figures may be seen in the Muṇḍeśvarī sculptures of the seventh century or the Sanchi Bodhisattvas of about the same period or a little earlier.[42] In all these sculptures the form is conceived as a much more solid mass, with a penchant for rather heavy proportions, than the more linear and attenuated formal statements of the Sarnath sculptures. Moreover, in the Sanchi figures the heads of the Bodhisattvas are adorned with a coronet, derived ultimately from Mathurā, and a similar coronet also crowns the head of Padmapāṇi in the Dhvaka baha caitya. The only difference is that while the prominent medallion of the Sanchi crown is adorned with a *kīrttimukha*, the Nepali version shows a floral or geometrical design. Two other curious details that the Sanchi and the Dhvaka baha Bodhisattvas share are the use of a heavy, broad, and ornate necklace rather than the string of pearls worn by Bodhisattvas at Sarnath, Nalanda, or Rajgir. In both instances also the *dhoti*, wrapped tightly around the thighs, is of a printed material, while generally the *dhoti* worn by Bodhisattvas at the eastern sites are plain. The patterned surface of the *dhoti* in the Nepali Bodhisattvas is in fact quite distinct and appears to be a local characteristic.

Similar comparisons may also be made between the Dhvaka baha Bodhisattvas and the stone sculptures at Paharpur, generally ascribed to the seventh century.[43] It may further be pointed out that the same concept of a niche framed by simple pilasters decorated with rosettes or geometrical patterns is characteristic of Paharpur as well as Nalanda, particularly along the lower section of temple no. 2 of the seventh century.

Much more purely Gupta in terms of design and execution are the pillars and the embellishments on the upper section of the caitya. The heraldic lions and the beautifully scrolled lotus decorating the moulding above the dentils are of direct Gupta origin, as is the crisp and articulate carving of the *kīrttimukha* and the floriate arch.

Thus, both in terms of the modelling of the figures and the delineation of details, the Dhvaka baha caitya seems a direct derivation from the sculptural tradition that prevailed in much of north and central India during the fifth and the sixth centuries. It is also apparent that it would be futile to look for one particular stylistic source in India for the Nepali idiom. Rather, the Nepali artists appear to have been aware of sculptural styles prevalent in several areas, but more particularly around Sarnath, Mathura and Sanchi. By assimilating and integrating elements from these diverse styles, they created a distinctive mode of their own. As I have already indicated, the seventh century was the most propitious period in Nepal for the creation of so recognizable a local style.

XIV

With the date of the Dhvaka baha caitya firmly established, it becomes easier to reassess some other early Buddhist sculptures in Nepal. We are also better equipped to suggest their dates with greater assurance.

Although revealing a greater simplicity in its iconographic design, the Naga baha Licchavi caitya (Figs. 29-32) must be placed somewhat later than the Dhvaka baha shrine. I have already pointed out that the four figures of the caitya are identifiable distinctly, and there is no ambiguity in the form of Maitreya. Moreover, the personified Vajrapuruṣa is now replaced by the attribute itself which the Bodhisattva holds with his left hand. The ambiguity in the representation of Maitreya in the Dhvaka baha caitya indicates a transitional hesitancy, whereas in the Naga baha caitya there is no doubt regarding the iconographical formula for the Bodhisattva.

Stylistically, however, the difference between the modelling and proportions of the figures in the two shrines is slight. The Naga baha figures are perhaps slightly more attenuated and reveal a stronger penchant for a linear definition of the form. Otherwise, with the serene and introspective expression of the faces, the soft and pliant modelling of the forms and the classical elegance of the swaying postures, the Naga baha figures still strongly echo Gupta characteristics.

What is rather curious about the Naga baha caitya is that each figure stands against a background delineated as a rocky surface. This conceptual rock formation with its swaying tips appears first in Indian sculpture at Sanchi. Its most flamboyant expression may be seen at Ajanta in several murals, most notably behind the two splendid painted Bodhisattvas flanking the entrance to the shrine in Cave 1. I know of no sculptures of Bodhisattvas, or similar shrines, in India where the rock formation is so emphasized. Nevertheless, it is not impossible that the sculptor of the Naga baha caitya was influenced by his mountainous surroundings, although the mode of delineation followed the conventional formula of rockery as evolved by the Indian artists.

Finally, mention may be made of the flame motif along the edge of the nimbus in the Naga baha caitya. The Dhvaka baha figures, of course, have no nimbuses at all, and the earliest indication of the flame border appears in the Gana baha Padmapāṇi of the sixth century (Fig.37). However, there are reasons to believe that the combined bead and flame motif, so common in later reliefs, really made its appearance in Nepal in the seventh century, although in the Naga baha shrines only the flame motif is applied.[44]

It thus seems that the Naga baha caitya, both on iconographical and stylistic considerations, is not far removed chronologically from the Dhvaka baha caitya. If the Dhvaka baha shrine is of the early seventh century, then the Naga baha caitya was carved no later than A. D. 700.

The three remaining *sarvotabhadra* caityas (Figs. 29-32) are substantially different from the Dhvaka baha and the Naga baha specimens, although they have one feature in common with the latter. In all three, the figures stand out in bold relief from the central shaft rather than continuing the niche concept of the Dhvaka baha shrine. In addition, the Tham bahil caitya also carries the swaying stylized rock design, although confined only to the base of the dome. As to their iconography I have already pointed out that all four figures in each shrine probably represent the Buddha in his transcendental aspect.

Of the three examples, the monolithic caitya at Svayambhūnāth presents us with interesting stylistic problems. Two of the Buddhas, which are all carved in moderate relief, are engaged in exhibiting the *varada* and the *abhaya* gestures with their right hands and the other two display gestures that are not articulately defined. Possibly, one of the gestures is a crude version of the *dharmacakrapravartanamudrā*, while the other may be a rudimentary form of a gesture that originated in Gandhāra and later became popular in Japanese Buddhist iconography. The gesture is known as *chiken-in* and is peculiar to Dainichi or Vairocana.

The general modelling and the treatment of the drapery appear as rather distant echoes of Sarnath models, although a parallel nearer home is the Cha bahil Buddha (Fig.48). Unlike the Cha bahil Buddha, however, the faces of the Svayambhūnāth figures are definitely Mongoloid. The profile view of the face reveals its astonishing flatness with little emphasis on the nose and the mouth, whereas in Sarnath images these features are more articulately delineated. The Mongoloid character of the faces is even more emphatically manifest in the slanting eyes although the closed eyelids are Gupta traits.

It is conceivable that this little caitya represents one of the earliest attempts by a Nepali sculptor to imitate a Sarnath model, perhaps from tiny votive plaques brought back by pilgrims rather than from a large model. In that case it must have been carved earlier than the Cha bahil Buddha which is comparably more refined aesthetically. An earlier date is also suggested by the clumsy delineation of the gestures and would point to a fourth or early fifth century model from India. The Mongoloid features could then be explained as the persistent expression of a native artistic intent before the overbearing impact of the Gupta tradition. One may further argue that if this were a later sculpture such an ambiguity in the rendering of the gestures would be difficult to comprehend. With regard to the two remaining Licchavi caityas, the similarities between the two groups of sculptures seem to be greater than their differences.

Unlike the Tham bahil caitya, that at Cha bahil is not conceived as a stūpa, as it does not have the crowning dome at the summit. Rather, the top of the aureole on each face extends vertically beyond the height of the shaft. Somewhat unusually also the nimbus of the Cha bahil shrine is of a plain variety, whereas in the other it is decorated with the flame motif. In addition, the Cha bahil Buddhas are framed by a simple band that serves as an aureole and re-emphasizes the shape of the backslab itself. In the Tham bahil caitya two of the Buddh raise their left hands to the shoulder, while the others have t left hand extended below the waist. In the Cha bahil caitya four Tathāgatas raise their left hands to the shoulder. Finall the garment of the Cha bahil Buddhas is delineated followi the Sarnath mode, as seen in the figures of Śākyamuni in t Dhvaka baha shrine (Fig. 25), whereas in the Tham bahil cait the volume of the garment is suggested by undulating stri tions following the Mathura style.

Notwithstanding such differences, however, in terms basic formal qualities, the figures in the two monuments do n differ significantly. Both groups of Tathāgatas are similar proportioned with remarkably broad shoulders, rather con stricted waists, heavy thighs and arms. The modelling is equal ly summary in both groups of figures with little attempt to de lineate the muscles. In both, the faces are typically Nepali wit a soft expression enhanced by the somewhat inarticulat definition of the features as compared to the faces of a Gupt Buddha. Finally, the fall of the garment on either side of th figures is treated almost in an identical fashion in both group of figures.

Thus, I am inclined to suggest that the two caityas ar roughly contemporaneous. The variations in this case are no sufficient to indicate a significant chronological differenc between the two monuments; rather, they may reflect th idiosyncratic mannerisms of two different sculptors.

With regard to the date of these two caityas, it seems reaso able to suggest that they are later than the Dhvaka baha an Naga baha shrines. Stylistically, they appear closer in term of modelling and manneristic rigidity to the eleventh centur Sūrya figures (Figs. 42, 43) than to the seventh century scul tures. On the other hand, the stylistic differences between th Dhvaka baha figures and the Cha bahil or the Tham bah caityas are not emphatic enough to postulate a definite chron logical sequence. In such a strictly religious art the limitation of the art-historical method, therefore, become obvious. I seems beyond doubt, nevertheless, that the Cha bahil Buddha are stylistically later than the seventh century Sarnath Buddh (Fig. 46), but certainly no later than the Bihar Buddha of th ninth century (Fig. 45). The Tham bahil figures, on the othe hand, may be given a slightly later date because of their stronge mannerist qualities.

It may be pertinent here to emphasize the basic stylist differences between a typical Pāla work and a contempora Nepali sculpture. All too often in the past scholars have co sidered post-ninth century Nepali art to be strongly influenc by that of Pāla Bihar or Bengal. A fundamental difference b tween the Nepali Buddhas, as seen in the Cha bahil or Tha bahil examples, and the Pāla Buddha is the greater naturalis in the latter's modelling as opposed to a more summary ar geometrically formal statement in the former. Even in t eleventh century Sūryas, where one might expect a great degree of Pāla influence, the Nepali sculptors continue to di play their penchant for a softer silhouette combined with greater abstraction in the modelling with little effort emphasize corporeal muscles. By the eleventh century Pā sculpture in fact becomes almost rococo in its exuberance f swaying figures and sumptuous ornamentations. The Nep sculptors, on the other hand, continue to exercise great restraint even when portraying themes of physical energ

The Buddha Image

XV

The standing Buddha and Bodhisattva types, once crystallized by the sculptors of the Dhvaka baha caitya, remained the model for successive generations of artists in Nepal. With almost negligible stylistic alterations the types persisted with remarkable tenacity for centuries.[45] Indeed, not until the Malla period (ca. 1200 and later) is there any perceptible change in the type of physiognomy or proportions. Conventions and norms have changed so slowly in Nepal that it becomes impossible to suggest firm dates for works of art that bear no inscriptions.

Perhaps, the most classic instance of such a misattribution has occurred with regard to a large figure of a standing Buddha at Svayambhūnāth. In publishing it first in *Artibus Asiae* years ago, H. Goetz regarded it as a work of the sixth century.[46] Subsequently D. R. Regmi attributed a ninth century date to it, which has recently been upheld by the Waldschmidts.[47] I have quite conclusively shown elsewhere that the sculpture is very likely a work of the seventeenth century and is of the same vintage as the other large Buddhas that sit impassively below the hill of Svayambhūnāth.[48] It clearly demonstrates how misleading evidences of style can be in the context of Nepali sculpture.

Equally untenable is the fifth-sixth century date suggested by Madanjeet Singh[49] for an image of the Buddha that stands partly embedded on the bank of the river Bagmati (Fig. 53). Clearly it must be considered a later sculpture than the Buddhas of the Dhvaka baha caitya. Compared to the Dhvaka baha Buddhas, the Bagmati specimen shows a greater degree of linearization, more akin to the modelling and proportions of the eleventh century Sūrya figures (Figs. 42, 43). In addition, the bold and floriate design of the flame motif along the edge of the aureole and the nimbus is far too ornate for such an early period as that of the Licchavis. Finally, the face of the Buddha, both in terms of the squarish shape and the features, has become distinctly Nepali and anticipates the faces that are typical of the sculptures of the Malla period. Thus, a tenth-eleventh century date for the Bagmati Buddha seems to be more reasonable than the suggested date of the fifth-sixth century.

No Buddha image, reflecting either the Mathura or the Gandhāra styles of the Kuṣāṇa period, is yet to come to light in the valley. Among the earliest images known so far, and which may have served as prototypes for the Dhvaka baha Buddhas (Fig. 27, 28), that at Cha bahil (Fig. 48) has been most frequently published. Although sadly mutilated, it is still an impressive figure reflecting the serenity and inner vitality that characterize the Sarnath Buddhas of the fifth century.

There is little doubt that the Cha bahil Buddha is closely related to the fifth century Buddhas in matters of both form and content. The transparent drapery covers both shoulders completely and then spreads out along the arms to enclose the figure as if in a trough. As in the Sarnath Buddhas the garments hug the body closely and yet reveal the outline in an emphatic fashion. Compared to the Sarnath Gupta Buddhas, however, the Nepali version is somewhat heavier with wider shoulders and rather fleshy thighs. Thus, in its emphasis on volumetric modelling, the Cha bahil figure seems to be related to the more ponderous Buddhas of Mathura of the Gupta period.

A number of other isolated images of the standing Buddha may with reasonable assurance be grouped with the Cha bahil Buddha. Of these, that standing beside the Gana baha Padmapāṇi is a sadly mutilated specimen (Fig. 49). A more impressive sculpture was recently discovered in a paddy field and appears to be a slightly more linear version of the Cha bahil statue. Among others mention may be made here of the magnificent figure at Bangemura (Fig. 50) and the somewhat abraded example at Kvanti bahal in Patan (Fig. 51).

All these examples are very similar to the Cha bahil Buddha or the Gana baha Padmapāṇi of the mid-sixth century (Fig. 37). All of them appear to reflect the same canons of proportions that result in rather thickset and sturdy bodies. The wide heavy shoulders and chests as well as the solid thighs are treated in an identical manner in all the examples. The stance is slightly awkward which appears almost as a trademark of the group. Especially similar are the treatment of the hands as well as such details as the circular knee caps, the etched sash, the round and fleshy face and the design along the edge of the aureole. Thus, it seems indubitable that not only are the figures contemporary works but very likely they are products of the same atelier as well.

The only bronze image of a standing Buddha that may belong to the ninth century is that in the British Museum (Fig. 52). It is closely related to the inscribed (Fig. 55) Los Angeles seated Buddha and may be accepted as a ninth century bronze with some degree of certainty. In addition, the lotus in the British Museum bronze is treated in a manner similar to two other bronzes (Figs. 77, 78) which must also be regarded as belonging to the Licchavi period. The prototype for the bronze Buddha nevertheless is the Maitreya figure in the Dhvaka baha shrine (Fig. 28), particularly in the delineation of the garment. At the same time it cannot be denied that the British Museum bronze bears a stronger resemblance to the Bagmati Buddha (Fig. 53) than to those in the Dhvaka baha shrine.

The only seated variety of the Buddha image that may indubitably be attributed to the Licchavi period is that placed within the niche of a much later stūpa near the Kvanti bahal at Patan (Fig. 54). Except that he is seated on a lotus in the meditating posture, the figure basically reflects the formal characteristics of the Cha bahil and the Bangemura Buddhas. All these sculptures are carved from the same bluish grey stone that becomes lustrous when polished. The Buddha here is shown making the *abhaya mudrā* with his right hand, while the left hand rests on his lap. The other seated Buddha image, possibly of the Licchavi period, is the small bronze in the Los Angeles collection (Fig. 55). Both hands of the figure are placed on the lap as befitting an ideal yogī. It is amazing how close the figure is to the seated Buddhas in the Dhvaka baha shrine (Fig. 24) or that in a Patan Licchavi caitya (Fig. 20). In the larger aspects of style, and especially in the equipoise of the composition and the serene elegance of the expression, the figure is still faithful to the norms that were crystallized by the sculptors of the sixth-seventh century.

Thus, there are two basic types of Buddha images that prevailed in Licchavi Nepal. Either he was shown standing in slight *contrapposto* or as seated in the classic posture of a yogī. The principal gestures exhibited are the *varada*, the *abhaya*, and the *samādhi-mudrā*, although the *dharmacakra-pravartana* also appears to have been familiar already by the mid-sixth century, if not earlier. It is further evident from the treatment of the robe that both the Mathura and Sarnath types of the Gupta Buddha were known to the Nepali sculptors. Significantly, however, no Buddha image carved in Mathura or Sarnath—or for that matter in Gandhāra—has so far been discovered in the valley. As a matter of fact no Nepali Buddha reveals any perceptible influence of the Gandhāra styles so that one is forced to conclude that there was very little cultural exchange between the two areas.

XVI

Only a few reliefs depicting incidents from the life of the Buddha may with any certainty be attributed to the Licchavi period. Of these the stele at Chapatol in Patan (Fig. 56) must be considered the earliest as its pedestal bears an inscription that may definitely be attributed to the sixth century. Moreover, the stylistic affinity of the sculpture to the Cha bahil Buddha or the Gana baha Avalokiteśvara is unmistakable.

The Buddha is seated in the middle of the stele and is flanked by two Bodhisattvas, both of whom carry the lotus and the flywhisk. Despite the mutilated condition of the lower portion of the relief the Tathāgata's hands appear to be in the gesture of meditation. There obviously were other figures in the damaged section but they are now beyond recognition. The inscription on the pedestal is also of no help as it records donations made for the repairs of the temple. The only other clue as to the identification of the relief is provided by leaves and branches of the Bodhi tree etched lightly around the head of the Tathāgata. This would normally indicate that the scene is associated with the occasion of the Master's enlightenment at Bodhgaya.

An alternate possibility is that the relief depicts the Sukhāvatī paradise in a succinct fashion with Amitābha in the centre flanked by Avalokiteśvara and Mahasthāmaprāpta. It may be recalled that in the Patan inscription Mahasthāmaprāpta's description is left rather vague which may explain why the sculptor gave him the same form as Avalokiteśvara. This ambiguity is also reflected in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* where Avalokiteśvara himself is said to stand on either side of Amitābha in two similar guises.[50] Thus the exact identification of the Chapatol relief must remain uncertain. It could represent an incident from the life of the Buddha, or it may portray an Amitābha triad. At any rate it seems to continue a type of stele that was popular in Kūṣaṇa Mathura, where the seated Buddha is flanked by two Bodhisattvas who are not clearly identified.

Equally enigmatic is the iconography of another such relief near the Siddhapokhri at Bhatgaon (Fig. 57). Here too the central figure of a Tathāgata seated on a lotus is flanked by two Bodhisattvas who hold identical attributes. In addition, two royal figures, a male and a female, kneel in front of the Bodhisattvas in adoration of the Buddha. They also appear to be placed on lotuses as the Bodhisattvas are. A horse's head peers out of the edge behind the male devotee. The Buddha's right hand is engaged in making the gesture of calling the earth to witness his victory over Māra (*bhūmisparśamudrā*).

Despite the gesture, however, it is not possible to identify the scene as the occasion of enlightenment. The fact that all the figures are perched on lotuses that rise from the ocean indicates the scene to be ideal rather than historical. I it does represent an incident from the life of the Master, it ma depict the occasion when King Prasenajit of Kośala visite the Buddha. More likely, the stele may have been a royal donation and the donors were simply included as paying homag to the Buddha.

Both the Chapatol and the Siddhapokhri reliefs are s remarkably similar that they may well be the products of th same atelier. The leaves and branches of the Bodhi tree in th Chapatol stele are etched in exactly the same manner as th flowers in the Gana baha Avalokiteśvara of the mid-sixt century. The horse in the Siddhapokhri stele is strongly reminiscent of the same animal portrayed in the fifth centur Viṣṇuvikrānta reliefs.[51] And all four sculptures are carve out of the same bluish-grey stone, which appears to have bee rather a popular material in the fifth and sixth centuries.

Two identical steles at Kvanti bahal in Patan, one of whic is illustrated here (Fig. 58), definitely portray an incident fro the life of the Buddha. The representation, however, is hierati and displays little narrative intent. The central image of th Buddha is flanked by two figures, one of whom is asceticall attired and the other robed and crowned in a princely fashio The regal figure upholds a parasol above the Buddha's hea while the other holds a pot with his left hand. There seem little doubt that the incident portrayed here is the Descent the Buddha from the Trayastriṁśa heaven where he had gon to preach to his parents. The ascetic attendant is Brahmā an the parasol bearer is Indra, who accompanied the Master o his return to earth. Stylistically, both reliefs are certainly late than the Dhvaka baha and the Naga baha caityas and are comparable to the ninth century Pāla stele (Fig. 45).

A charming panel now preserved in the National Museu at Kathmandu shows only a section of what must once hav been a magnificent portrayal of the Temptation of Mā (Fig. 59). Only the hordes of Māra and his daughter a represented in the portion but with what power of expressio The militant demons with their fierce miens or animal hea are obviously the gaṇas of Śiva, as they are described in suc *purāṇas* as the *Matsya*. It may be pointed out that Māra is n other than the Brāhmanical Kāma, the god of desire, who w destroyed and then resurrected by Śiva. Interesting also is th figure of the emaciated female with pendulous breasts for sh provides a prototype for the later images of Cāmuṇḍā, ferocious form of Durgā. In contrast to the militant demon Māra's daughters sway elegantly as they exhibit their physic charms in a vain attempt to seduce the imperturbable Gautam

This exquisitely rendered fragment has been publishe twice and both the authors have attributed it to the sixt century.[52] This is clearly an unacceptable date and mo realistically it may be considered a work of the eighth centu at the earliest.

A frequently published and better known relief is th depicting the Nativity of the Buddha (Fig. 60). While publis ing it for the first time in 1964, Stella Kramrisch suggeste a ninth century date for the relief, and since then mo scholars have accepted her suggestion except Madanjeet Sing who dates it to the late tenth.[53] I have elsewhere discussed length the difficulties involved in suggesting a firm date f this handsome relief. While it shares features in common wi

(Continued on Page 3

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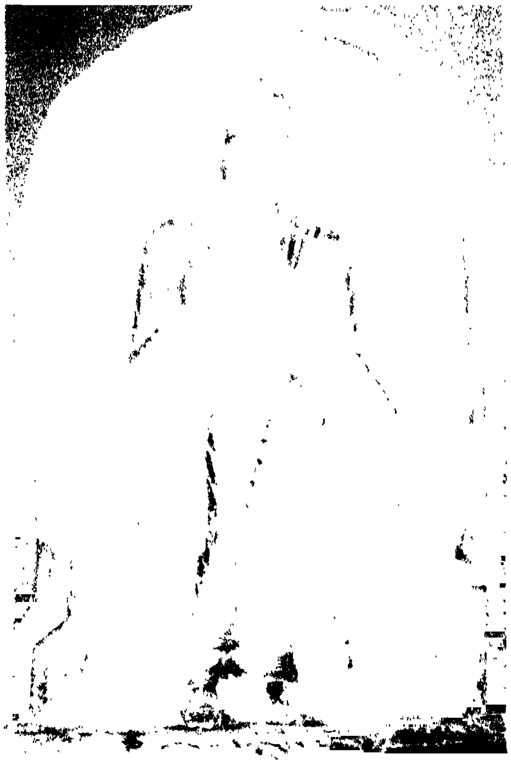
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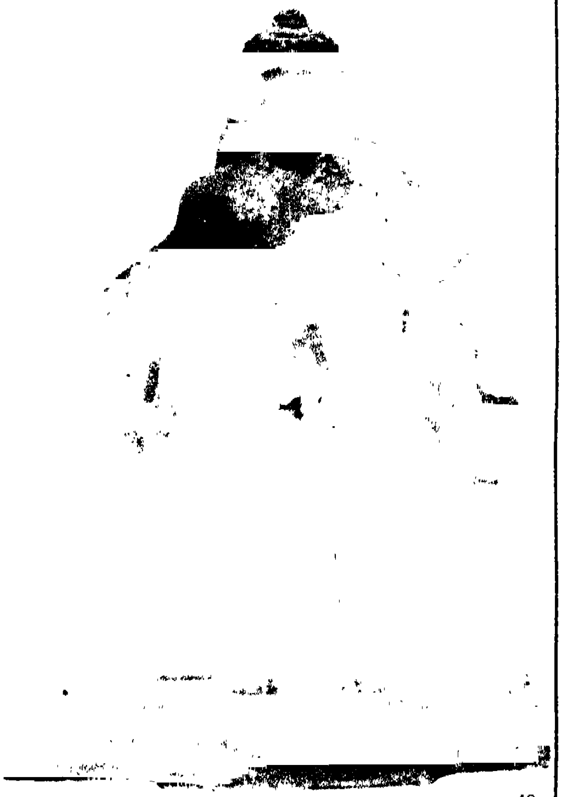
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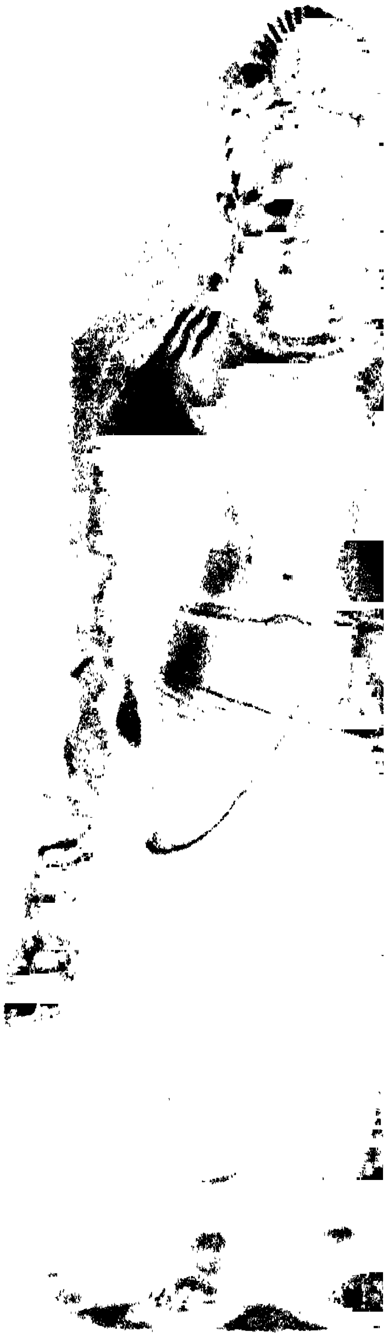
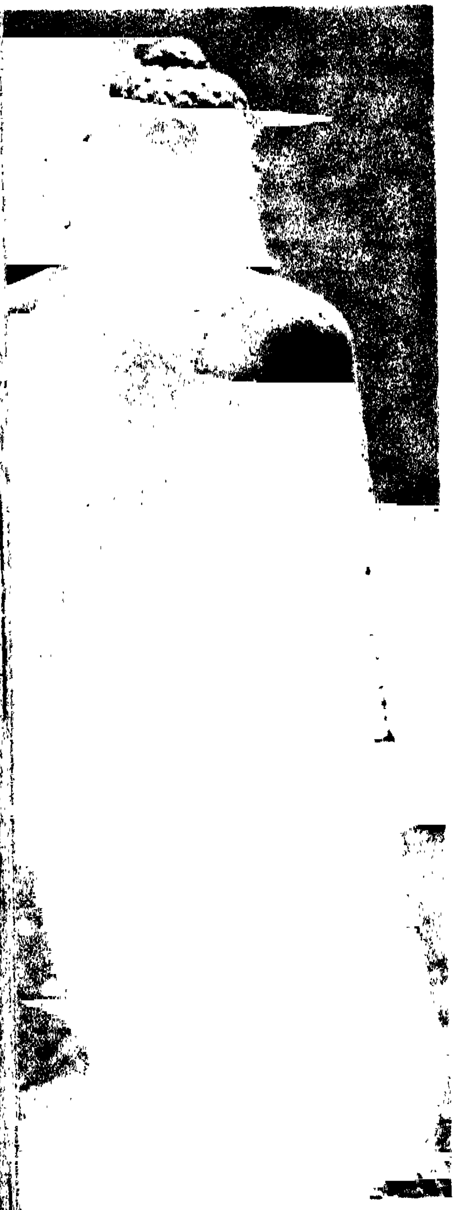
43 Sūrya, Saugal, Patan, A.D. 1083
44 Avalokiteśvara. Bihar (India). century
45 Buddha, Bihar, Earl Morse Colle 9th century
46 The Great Descent, Sarnath, 7th ce
47 Avalokiteśvara, Bihar, 7th century



8 *Buddha, Cha bahil, 6th century*
9 *Buddha, Gana baha, 6th century*
0 *Buddha, Bangemura, Kathmandu, 6th century*



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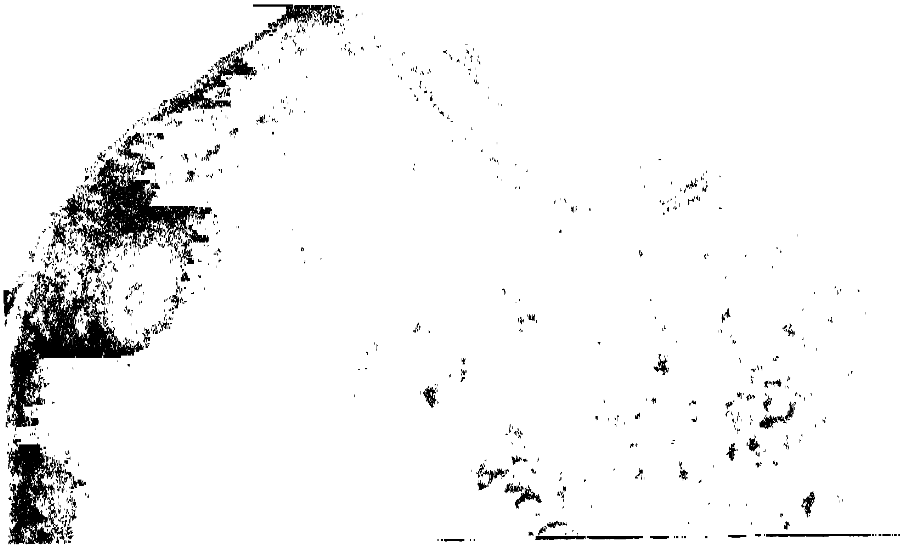

51 Buddha, Kvanti bahal, Patan, 6th century
52 Buddha, British Museum, 9th-10th century
53 Buddha, Bagmati Bank, 11th century
54 Buddha, Kvanti bahal, 6th century
55 Buddha, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Heeramaneck Collection, 9th Century

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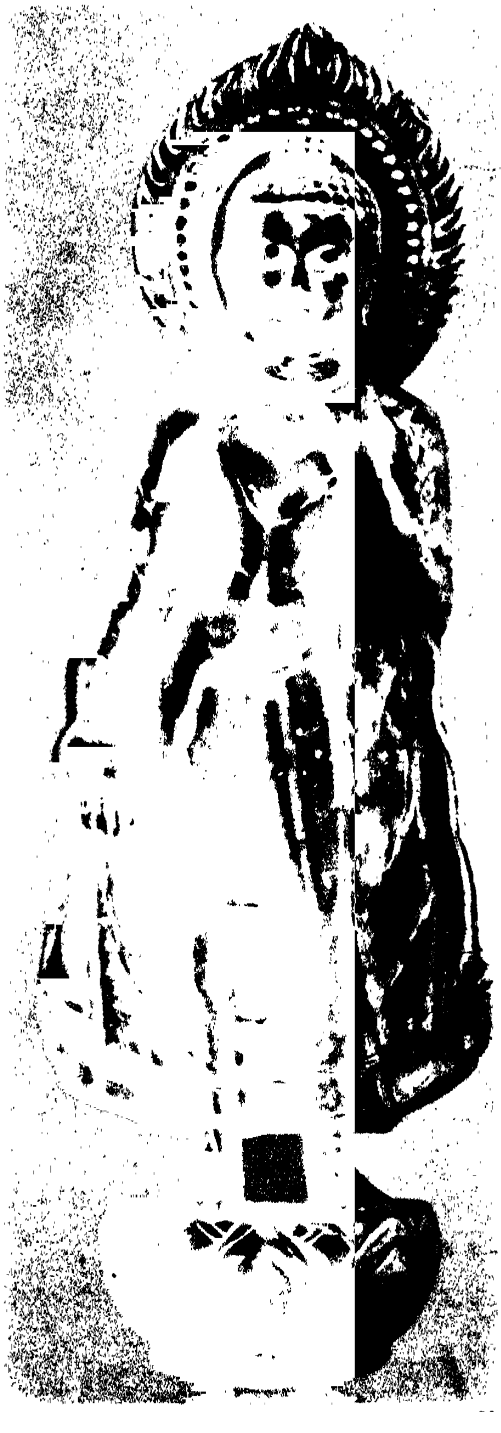

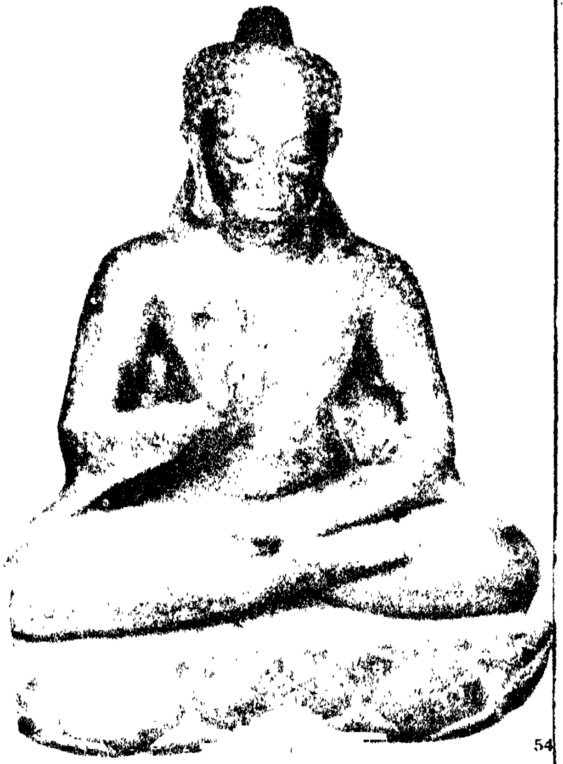

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56 *Tathāgata Triad, Chapatol, Patan, 6th century*
57 *Tathāgata Triad, Siddhapokhri, Bhatgaon, 6th century*
58 *The Great Descent, Kvanti bahal, 9th-10th century*
59 *Nativity of the Buddha, National Museum, Kathmandu*

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borde, National Museum, Kath-
, 8th-9th century
Uku bahal, Patan, 13th century
a with Padmapāṇi and Vajrapāṇi,
9th century
a with Padmapāṇi and Vajrapāṇi,
9th century or later

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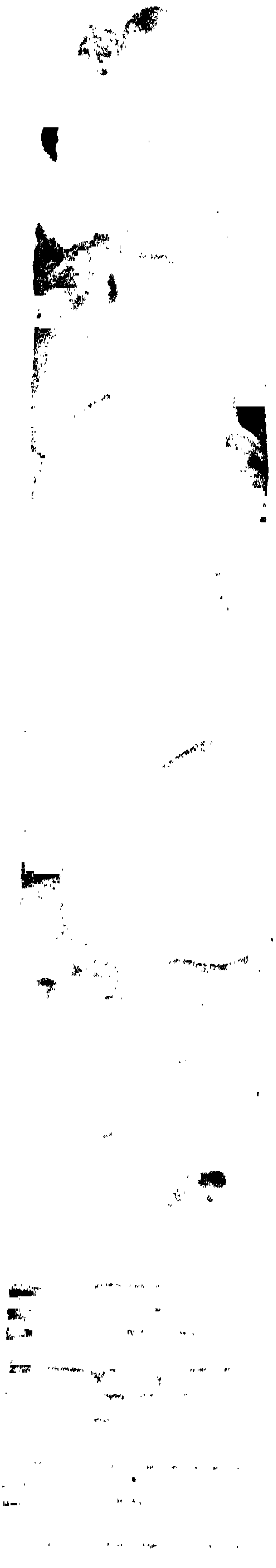

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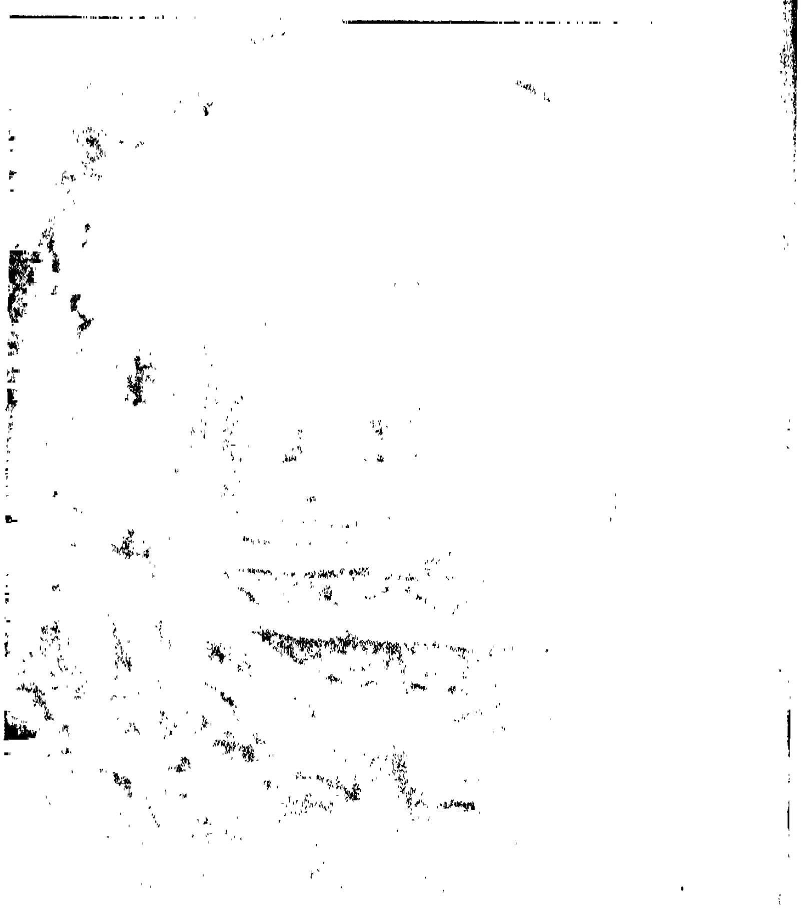

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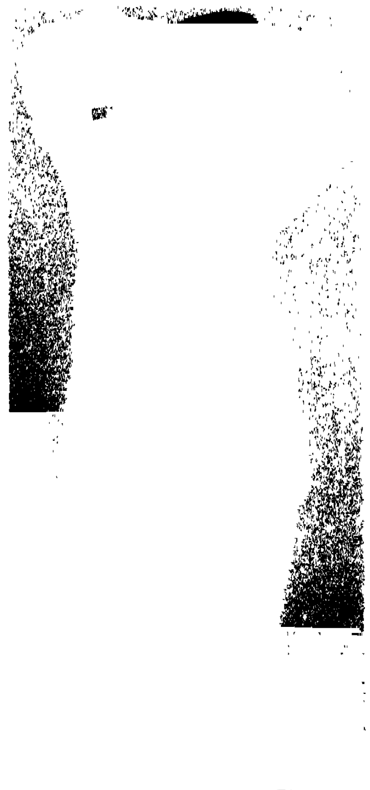
64 *Bodhisattva, National Museum, Kathmandu, 3rd century*
65 *Rear view of Fig. 64.*
66 *Avalokiteśvara, Siga baha, Kathmandu, 9th century*
67 *Avalokiteśvara, Cha babil, 9th century*
68 *Avalokiteśvara, Yampi baha, 10th century*
69 *Avalokiteśvara, Zimmerman Collection, New York, 9th century*
70 *Avalokiteśvara, Sarnath Museum, 8th century*



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ya, Heeramaneck Collection, New
th century
ya, Cleveland Museum of Art, 9th
y
āṇi, Ellora, Cave 4, 7th century
Attendant, Nachna Kuthara
ya-Pradesh, India), 5th century
and Pañcaśikha, Kanheri, 6th
y
āṇi, Los Angeles County Museum
8th century

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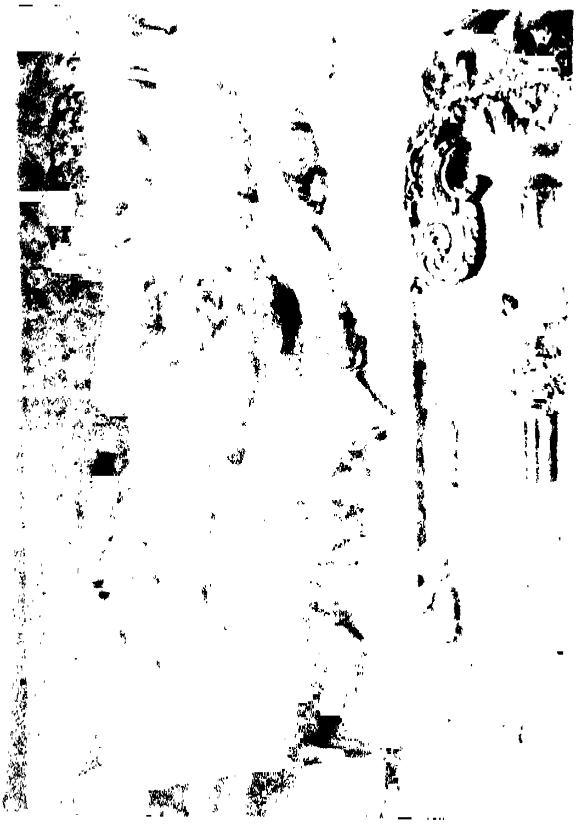

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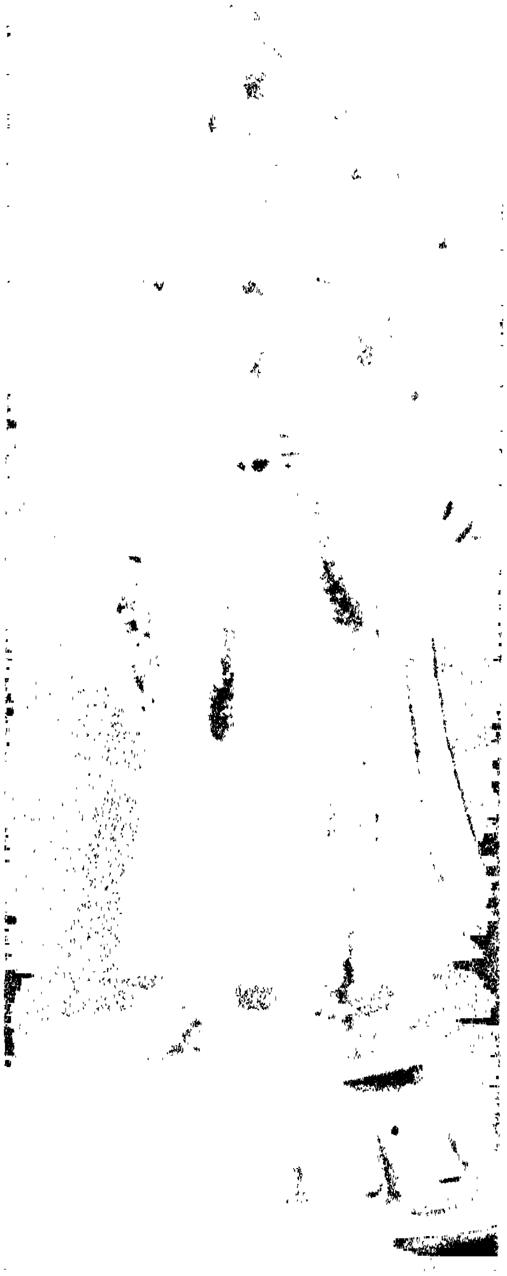
77 *Vajrapāṇi, Humann Collec*
York, 8th century.
78 *Vajrapāṇi, Nalanda Museum,*
79 *Hārīti, Balaju, 3rd century*
80 *Hārīti, Patan, 7th century*
81 *Devi, Private Collection (U*
century
82 *Tārā, Bickford Collection, Cle*
century

83 *Tārā, Swali Collection, Bombay, 8th-9th century*
84 *Confronted deer and devotees, National Museum, Kathmandu, 6th century*
85 *Architectural fragments, Cha bahil, 7th-8th century*
86 *Buddhist devotees, Cha bahil, 7th-8th century*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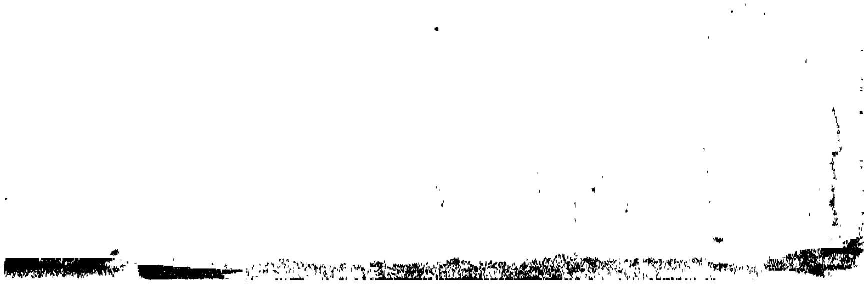
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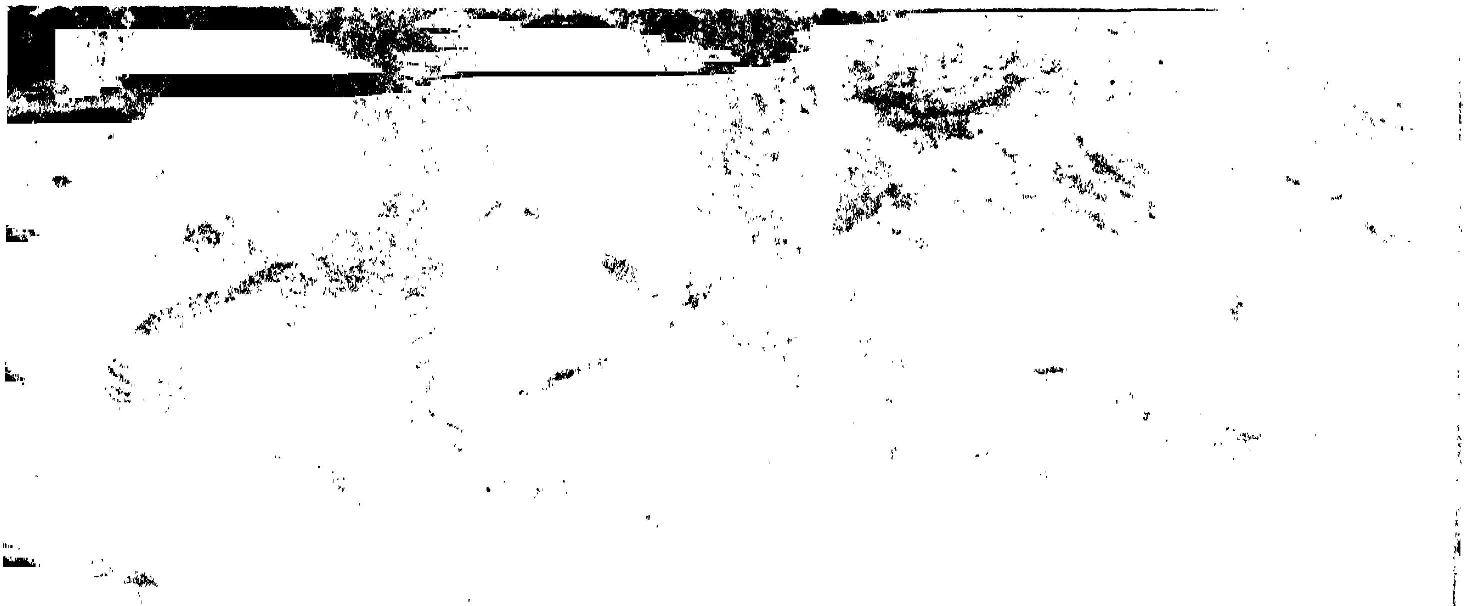
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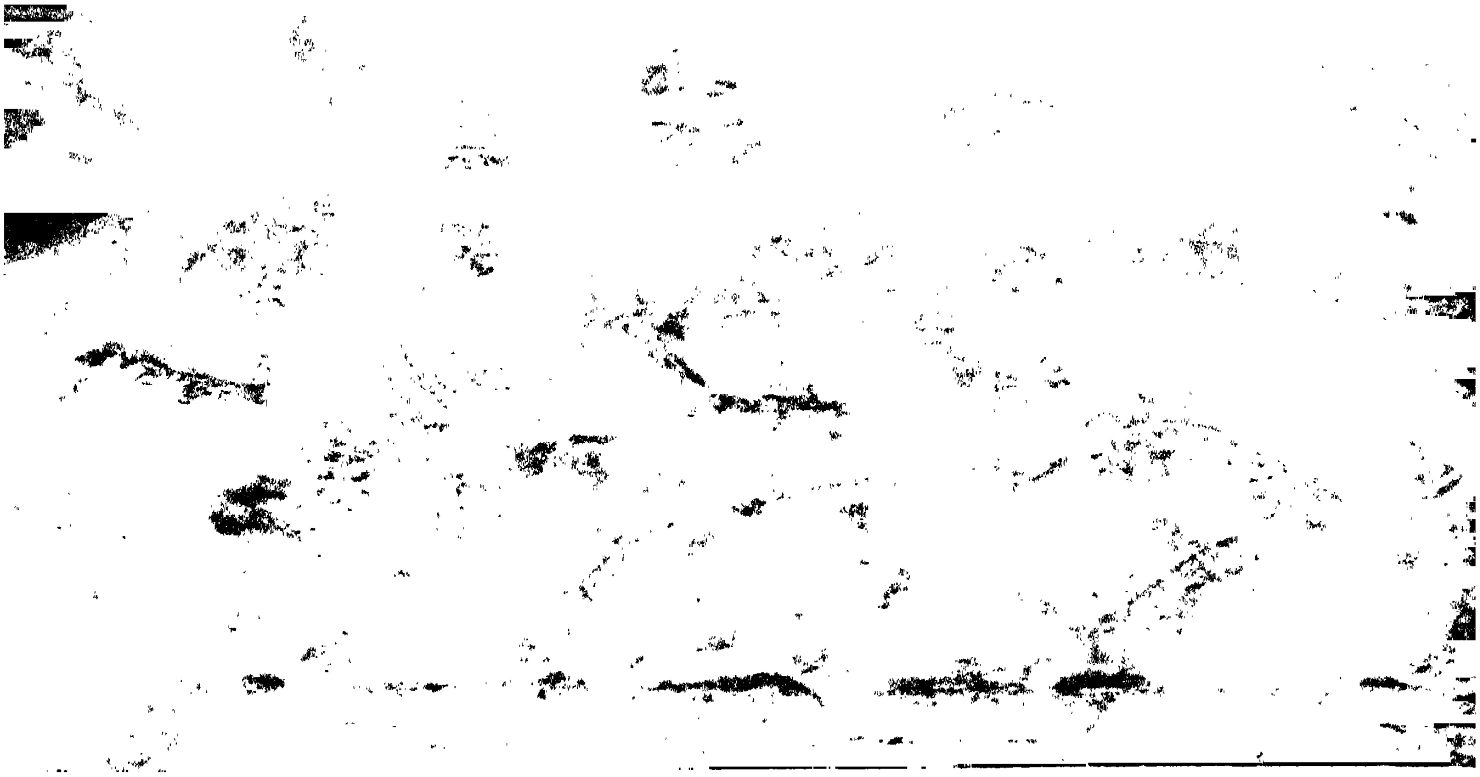

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87 *Buddhist devotees, Cha bahil, 7th-8th century*

88 *Buddhist devotees, Tukan bahal, Kathmandu, 8th-9th century*

89 *Fragmentary Reliefs, Tukan bahal, 8th 9th century*

90 *Fragmentary Relief, Deo Patan, 6th-7th century*

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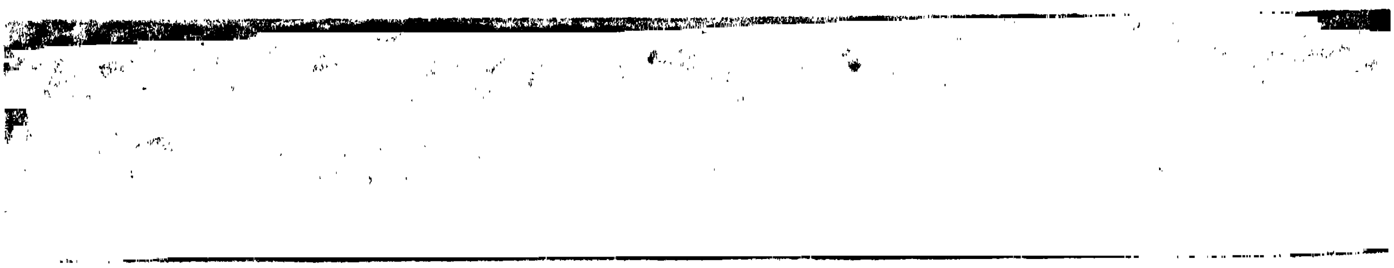

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(Continued from Page 22)

such indubitably early sculptures as the Cha bahil Buddha (Fig. 48) or the Chapatol triad (Fig. 56), the figure of Māyā is also remarkably close to the beautiful nymphs and yakṣīs carved on the thirteenth century struts at Uku bahal in Patan (Fig. 61). The Nativity relief thus may well be a later copy of an original that belonged to the Licchavi period, but this once again demonstrates the difficulties in dating works of art in Nepal.

Two very similar reliefs, stuck arbitrarily on stūpas at Patan, portray the Buddha attended by two Bodhisattvas (Figs. 62, 63). In both reliefs the Buddha is seated on the central lotus in the yogic posture. In one his right hand is engaged in making the gesture of munificence (*varadamudrā*), while in the other both hands perform the *dharmacakrapravartanamudrā*. To the Buddha's right is the Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi attended by a kneeling female and on his left is Vajrapāṇi with his cherubic dwarf. Although all five figures are on full blown lotuses, the divinity of the three principal figures is assured by means of the flaming nimbuses behind their heads. In each instance Vajrapāṇi holds a fly whisk while Padmapāṇi is portrayed as blessing the kneeling female.

Notwithstanding the fact that such triads were included in the repertoire of the Gupta sculptors, they are far more abundantly represented in the western Indian caves, particularly at Ajanta and Kanheri. I have already mentioned that such triads were also extremely popular at Mathura during the Kuṣāṇa period where, however, the personalities of the two Bodhisattvas were not clearly defined. This vagueness appears also to persist in the two early reliefs in Nepal portraying what seem to be incidents from the life of the Buddha (Figs. 56, 57). In the two Patan reliefs the basic compositional formula continues to persist, but the two Bodhisattvas are now clearly distinguished.

Although one of the steles is better preserved than the other, stylistically they appear to be contemporary works. The crisp and articulate definition of the lotus stems and flowers bears the stamp of Licchavi workmanship. The figures of the Bodhisattvas, even if less spontaneously rendered than those in the Dhvaka baha caitya, are certainly not quite as stylized and mannered as the attendants in the two eleventh century Sūrya images. The Buddhas, revealing the same penchant for suave though abstract formal statement, are related closely to the ninth century Los Angeles bronze.

Sitting triumphantly on the central lotus Śākyamuni is indeed a transcendental figure as he is described in the Mahāyāna sūtras. In the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* we are told: "Those (Bodhisattvas), who are filled with faith, and conceive, believe, and trust in the perfect knowledge of the blessed Buddhas, they .... appear sitting cross-legged in the flowers of the lotus."[54] It is also rather interesting that just as in the Buddhist triads of the Kuṣāṇa and Gupta periods the two Bodhisattvas are not clearly distinguished, so also in the early Mahāyāna sūtras do we find a similar vagueness about their identity. The two Bodhisattvas are definitely distinguished for the first time in the ***Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa***, **a text generally believed to have been composed in the eighth century.[55] There a triad is described with Avalokiteśvara, foremost among the gods, and Vajrapāṇi, the leader of the *vidyādharas*, flanking the Buddha. Such a description may well have served as the textual basis for the two Nepali triads.**

The Boddhisattvas

XVII

Avalokiteśvara

It is manifestly clear that the cult of Avalokiteśvara was well established in the valley by the mid-sixth century. In epigraphs he is specifically referred to as *bhagavata*, a term usually applied only to important cult divinities, and at least one inscription informs us that he was worshipped with lamps and incense. The cult of Avalokiteśvara has continued to retain its influence, although generally Buddhism is on the wane in modern Nepal. Indeed, that the cult had already become prominent in Licchavi Nepal is evident from the traditional belief that when King Narendradeva introduced the car festival in honor of yogi Matsyendranāth, the yogi was promptly metamorphosed into a god and identified with Avalokiteśvara.[56]

I have already discussed the Dhvaka baha image of Avalokiteśvara which, as we will see, remained the prototype that has been endlessly copied by Nepali sculptors well into the present times. Although the sculptors of the Dhvaka baha caitya were obviously familiar with the Gupta style in India, at least one sculpture has recently come to light that may well have been a stylistic predecessor within the valley. The image was discovered in Harigaon and is now preserved in the National Museum at Kathmandu (Figs. 64, 65).

Clearly the image is of the Yakṣha-Bodhisattva type that prevailed in Kuṣāṇa India. Reminiscent at once of such Bodhisattva figures as those dedicated by Friar Bala at Sarnath or Kauśāmbi, it was obviously intended for a hypaethral shrine. Not quite as monumental as the Friar Bala Bodhisattvas, nevertheless, the two sculptures are stylistically akin both in terms of the modelling as well as in their hieratic frontality. By contrast the Dhvaka baha Bodhisattvas, while continuing to emphasize the volumetric modelling, express greater linear rhythm achieved especially by the more graceful *débanchement* of the posture.

Few Bodhisattva images of the Kuṣāṇa period can be identified with any certainty as Avalokiteśvara. It is manifestly clear that the cult of Maitreya was far more popular both in the Gandhāra and the Mathura areas. However, by the fifth century the cult of Avalokiteśvara had become well established, as it is evident from both archaeology and literature.[57]

One of the significant traits of Avalokiteśvara images, already apparent in fifth century Indian examples and clearly discernible in the Dhvaka baha caitya, is the presence of one or more kneeling females near the Bodhisattva's feet. In subsequent steles in Nepal (Figs. 66-68), as also in most reliefs from Bihar or Bengal, similar females are invariably included. Significantly, no other important Bodhisattva—whether Maitreya, Mañjuśrī or Vajrapāṇi—is so ubiquitously accompanied by female devotees. There thus appears to have been a conscious effort on the part of the Mahāyānists around the fifth century to make the cult of Avalokiteśvara particularly popular with women.

It is well known that the worship of Avalokiteśvara was especially recommended by the Buddha to ward off evils and perils, particularly in connection with travel. Both on the ocean and on the road Avalokiteśvara functioned almost as a guardian

angel for travellers, a large number of whom were no doubt monks and merchants. Indeed, the entire litany of Avalokitesvara, comprising the twenty-fourth chapter of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, is concerned with his role of a saviour during travel. Later specific texts such as the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* were composed as an elaboration upon the same theme.[58]

More curiously, however, in the same chapter of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, Avalokiteśvara is said to grant children to barren women. "If a woman," the Buddha declares, "desirous of male offspring. . . . adores the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, she shall get a son, nice, handsome, and beautiful; . . . . If a woman is desirous of getting a daughter, a nice, handsome, beautiful girl shall be born to her."[59]

It is thus clear that during the very early phase of the development of the cult Avalokiteśvara was conceived as a fertility god in addition to his principal role of a saviour. This must have considerably popularized his cult among women who are so frequently associated with his images. Such allusions to his fertility aspect may further have been germinal in his later conversion to a goddess of mercy in China.

Of Avalokiteśvara's attributes the lotus is of course classic and is invariably included in Licchavi images. In most instances also the effigy of his parental Tathāgata, Amitābha, is represented in the crown or the *jaṭāmukuṭa*. As the poet Buddhakāra[60] sang:

> *May the great saint, his body formed of moonlight,*
> *within whose towering headdress Amitābha,*
> *like a rising sun encircled by dark clouds,*
>
> *furnishes a wreath of red* aśoka *blossom,*
> *dispel your grief and grant you*
> *the streaming nectar of his peaceful happiness.*

Indeed, "streaming nectar" forms the very essence of the third distinguishing attribute of Avalokiteśvara. In most images his right hand displays the *varadamudrā* and from which, according to the text, nectar is said to flow.

> *All conquering is the Saviour of the World.*
> *His lotus hand, stretched down in charity,*
> *is dripping streams of nectar to assauge*
> *the thirsty spirits of the dead.*[61]

This verse by the poet Ratnakīrti admirably describes a type of image that had already become familiar in Gupta India. In such reliefs we see kneeling "spirits", known as *sūcimukha*, eagerly drinking the nectar that drips from Avalokiteśvara's hands. As another poet laments, the mouths (*mukha*) of the spirits are too narrow (*sūci*) and hence they are unable to drink the ambrosia.

> *"From the lake of nectar that is your heart*
> *and that has been enriched by rains of pity,*
> *that the stream came forth and by successive narrowings*
> *grew five in channels leading to the barely opened mouths*
> *of those distressed by thirst:-*
> *How else had this been done but by your hand?"*[62]

Three of the most impressive steles representing Avalokiteśvara stand in the Sigha baha at Kathmandu (Fig. 66), the Yampi baha at Patan (Fig.68) and the Cha bahil in Deo Patan (Fig. 67). The first two were published by Stella Kramrisch who suggested a seventh-eighth century date for both.[63] In all three images the Bodhisattva is flanked by a pair of kneeling women. In the Sigha baha and Cha bahil examples the females kneel on two small lotuses which spring from the stem of the central lotus on which the Bodhisattva stands. In the Yampi baha sculpture, however, the lotuses are no longer supported by stems and the aureole behind is ornamented with baroque exuberance.

Stylistically, the three steles are certainly closer to the eleventh century sculptures, such as the two Patan Sūryas, than they are to the Dhvaka baha group. Yet the figures are not quite as attenuated and mannered as those in the eleventh century images, although the Yampi baha relief is more exuberantly ornate than any known eleventh century sculptures. Indeed, in its decorativeness it is comparable to the twelfth century Sūrya from Naksal.[64] A better stylistic comparison for the Cha bahil and the Sigha baha steles is offered by the magnificent Bodhisattva from Sarnath (Fig. 69), which is perhaps a sculpture of the eighth century. In my opinion, therefore, these two Nepali sculptures may be attributed a ninth century date rather than the seventh-eighth century suggested by Kramrisch.

Of the countless bronze images of Avalokiteśvara that have come to light in recent years, only one can with any degree of certainty be assigned to the Licchavi period. This is a bronze now in the Zimmerman collection in New York (Fig. 70). The Bodhisattva here stands on a lotus very much in the manner in which he does so in the Patan steles (Figs. 62, 63), or the unquestionably early Vajrapāṇi in the Humann collection (Fig. 77). In addition, the design and form of the aureole are remarkably similar to the nimbus of the British Museum Buddha (Fig. 52) or the inscribed Los Angeles bronze of the ninth century (Fig. 55).

XVIII

Maitreya

Wang Hsüan tse's testimony, referred to earlier, definitely indicates that Maitreya, the future Buddha, was not unknown in Nepal in the seventh century. No inscription of the Licchavi period, however, makes mention of the Bodhisattva, and significantly he is not included in the Tvagaltol inscription. Yet Maitreya was already pre-eminent in Śrāvakayāna Buddhism, and certainly in Kuṣāṇa art of Gandhāra and Mathura he was a popular figure.

Even as late as the Gupta period, however, there appears to have been some ambiguity regarding the exact iconographic form of Maitreya. Both in Gandhāra and Mathura he is predominantly represented as a Bodhisattva, sometimes in a princely garb, at others as an ascetic. His conceptual relationship with Brahmā is obvious for Maitreya is conceived as a wise brahmin and an ascetic. This relationship is also reflected in his iconography in the form of the vase of immortality that he invariably carries and which was often replaced in later iconography by a sprig of *nāgakeśara* flower. Apart from a Bodhisattva, Maitreya may also be represented as a Tathāgata, dressed in the garb of a monk and seated in the so-called "European" position, although I am yet to come across a textual description for this posture. The position, however, is also given to the Buddha and is no doubt derived from Kuṣāṇa royal portraits.

Actual representations of Maitreya in Licchavi Nepal are rare. I have earlier attempted to identify one of the two standing Tathāgatas in the Dhvaka baha shrine as Maitreya, but the suggestion is only tentative. The earliest indisputable representation of the Bodhisattva occurs in the Naga baha caitya (Fig. 31). Portrayed as an ascetic Bodhisattva, Maitreya's hair is arranged in a chignon and the hands carry the rosary and the vase. Unmistakably his form here is modelled after Brahmā. There seems little doubt that the sculptor of the Kvanti bahal stele (Fig. 58) used such a figure of Maitreya as the prototype for his Brahmā, so akin are they both iconographically and stylistically. Indeed, the only difference between the Naga baha Maitreya and the two known representations of Brahmā in Licchavi Nepal is the additional heads of the latter.

Only two bronze images of Maitreya may with reasonable certainty be attributed to the Licchavi period. One of these is a magnificent gilt bronze where the Bodhisattva stands in an exaggerated *déhanchement* (Fig. 71). His right hand is raised to his chest and may have held a rosary; the left hand holds a vase. Stylistically, the figure is so closely related to Gupta prototypes and is so different from typical Nepali bronzes of the eleventh century or later that it seems difficult not to accept a ninth century date for this impressive bronze. Both in the sinuous outline of the figure as well as the pensive though radiant expression of the face, the Bodhisattva reminds one of the famous Padmapāṇi in Cave I at Ajanta. This, indeed, is the compassionate saviour whose "glorious face is bright with gathered moonlight and his glance is soft with that deep pity that he bears within".[65]

The second bronze is now in the Cleveland Museum and was first published by Kramrisch[66] who identified the figure as Maitreya and suggested a seventh eighth century date for it (Fig. 72). Indeed, this is the type of figure where the identification becomes difficult. The type was obviously employed freely to represent the Buddha, the future Buddha Maitreya, and also the Tathāgata Vairocana. Unless, therefore, the context is clear, one cannot be dogmatic about the identification of such isolated bronzes. It may be mentioned, however, that a similar bronze figure of the nineteenth century is inscribed with the name of Maitreya so that it is very likely that Kramrisch's identification is correct. The gesture of the hands is, of course, appropriate for Maitreya the future preacher of the *Dharma*. As to the date the ninth would be more realistic than the seventh-eighth century suggested by Kramrisch.

XIX

Vajrapāṇi

Although Vajrapāṇi is not as important a figure as Maitreya in the Buddhist pantheon, he certainly appears to have enjoyed a greater popularity in Licchavi Nepal. As we have already seen he is definitely present in both the Dhvaka baha and the Naga baha shrines. The Nepali sculptors also seem to have continued a type of image that was considerably popular in the Deccan (Fig. 72) but was not altogether unknown in the Sarnath area (Fig. 39). Essentially he is similar to Avalokiteśvara but has a distinct crown or coiffure and holds the thunderbolt that emerges from the head of a dwarf.

It has already been asserted that the custom of personifying the attributes was common in Gupta India, particularly with Brāhmanical images. The practice was especially popular in representations of Viṣṇu but was also applied to other Brāhmanical divinities and guardian deities. A classic instance is the Śaiva guardian at the entrance to the fifth century Śiva temple at Nachna Kuthara (Fig. 74). The trident held by the deity emerges from the head of the impish dwarf whose arms are crossed just below the chest. He is further adorned with a snake as we also find in the case of Vajrapuruṣa in Nepal.

It is clear that the *āyudhapuruṣa* (personified attribute) is here conceived as a *gaṇa*, the favourite attendants of Śiva. In the case of Vajrapāṇi the *āyudhapuruṣa* is very likely a *guhyaka* for Vajrapāṇi is often described in texts as *guhyādhipati*, the lord of the *guhyas*, a title he shares with Kubera. It may be noted that the words *gaṇa* and *guhyaka* are used synonymously in Indian literature which is why the figures have identical forms in art.

In Indian Buddhist art the prototype for the Nepali Vajrapuruṣa can be traced back to the example from Sarnath (Fig. 39), the theophany scene from Kanheri showing Indra (Fig. 75), and the giant guardian Bodhisattva at Ellora (Fig. 73). The Ellora figure is probably contemporary with the Dhvaka baha shrine. It may further be pointed out that both conceptually and iconographically Indra and Vajrapāṇi are closely related, *vajrapāṇi* or thunderbolt bearer being a common epithet of Indra. Later in Nepal the icons of the two deities, both having remained popular, can be distinguished only by the additional third eye marked horizontally across Indra's forehead.

Apart from the Dhvaka baha sculpture, two bronzes representing Vajrapāṇi must be considered as examples of Licchavi art. One of these, by now well known, is in the Los Angeles County Museum (Fig. 76); the other belongs to the Humann collection (Fig. 77). There can be little doubt that the Humann bronze is derived directly from such a prototype as the Nachna Kuthara Śaiva guardian (Fig. 74). Both Bodhisattvas have the same cascading locks falling down the left shoulder and the dwarfs are treated in a like manner in both. At the same time, however, the Humann bronze stylistically would appear to be somewhat later than the Dhvaka baha Vajrapāṇi.

The Los Angeles bronze is by contrast somewhat simpler. The *dhoti*, as in the Nachna Kuthara figure, comes only down to the knees and the torso is left remarkably unencumbered. A single strand of pearls emphasizes the wide chest and broad shoulders similar to the Dhvaka baha Bodhisattvas. Like the Dhvaka baha Vajrapāṇi the figure here is not provided with the sacred thread, which is present in the Humann bronze. A lofty crown in the shape of a bishop's mitre adorns the Bodhisattva's head. Only the Naga baha Vajrapāṇi (Fig. 32) is given a similar crown, though of a more ornate design. I know of no other instance in India or Nepal where the Bodhisattva has such a distinctive crown. The other significant iconographic difference between the Humann and the Los Angeles Vajrapāṇis is the fact that the former holds the boss against the chest, while the latter displays his right hand in the *varadamudrā*.

Stylistically as well the two bronzes are substantially different. The Humann Vajrapāṇi is a more elegant figure with his elaborate coiffure, a softer expression of the face and a more linear definition of the form. The Los Angeles bronze, on the other hand, is more simply though powerfully modelled and has a more imperious bearing because of the imposing crown. Notwithstanding such differences I am inclined to suggest that they are both contemporary works, possibly of the eighth century. Very likely they represent two of the earliest bronzes brought so far to light in Nepal.

The most significant difference between this type of Vajrapāṇi and that belonging to the Naga baha shrine is that instead of the dwarf Vajrapuruṣa the attribute in the latter is clasped by the left hand. This became the standard practice henceforth in Nepal, although sometimes the Bodhisattva is shown to clasp a lotus with the thunderbolt placed upon the flower. It may be recalled that this is how the position of the attribute is described in the Licchavi inscription discussed earlier. In no icon of the Licchavi period, however, do we see this mode adopted.

Only two bronze images of this conventional variety may possibly be attributed to the Licchavi period. One of these is the little bronze that was discovered in a jar with Aṁśuvarman's coins when the foundations of the modern Gana baha were being excavated recently (Fig. 40). Circumstantially, it may be a bronze of the Licchavi period, although Aṁśuvarman's coins probably remained in circulation long after the seventh century.

The other bronze is now in the Nalanda Museum and was discovered on site I A at Nalanda (Fig. 78). Ever since it has been regarded as a Pāla bronze of the eighth-ninth century. While the dating of the bronze may be accurate, particularly when compared with the Zimmerman Avalokiteśvara (Fig. 70) or the Los Angeles Buddha of the ninth century (Fig. 55), there can be little doubt that it is a product of Nepali workmanship. In the modelling of the torso it is directly related to the Los Angeles Vajrapāṇi, the lotus on which he stands is very close to those in the Zimmerman or Humann bronzes, and the halo is equally distinctive of Nepal. The softness of expression as well as the additional sash tied around the waist may also be seen in the Naga baha Vajrapāṇi, while the manner of tying the hair in a bun at the top of the head occurs on several Garuḍas which certainly belong to the Licchavi period.

XX

Goddesses

The only images of a Buddhist goddess that may indubitably be attributed to the Licchavi period represent Hāritī. Hāritī, it may be recalled, was the child devouring ogress who was converted by the Buddha. From a malevolent spirit, she became the very guardian of children. Her images were commonly featured in Buddhist monasteries, particularly outside the refectory, and Hsüan-tsang made it a point to comment upon her cult.

There are at least three identifiable images of Hāritī in the valley. One of these is still worshipped in a temple at Svayambhūnāth under the name of Śitalā, the Brāhmanical goddess of smallpox.[67] She is seated frontally with a number of children, a couple of whom appear to be climbing her shoulders. Of all the Buddhist images in Nepal this is by far the closest both stylistically and iconographically to Gandhāran icons of the goddess. The cult of Hāritī was particularly popular in Gandhāra during the Kuṣāṇa period, and the Svayambhūnāth image seems to be a close copy of a Kuṣāṇa original.

An effaced Hāritī may be seen in a small shrine in Balaju (Fig. 79). Locally she is called Ajimā or grandmother, an appropriate name considering her function. Seated imperiously the goddess carries a single child in her lap. The figure is at once reminiscent of Hāritī images of Kuṣāṇa Mathura, so strongly does it reflect the characteristics of the Kuṣāṇa style.[68] It may be remembered, however, that the image may represent simply a mother goddess, or specifically Skandamātā. There are several other such figures of the early Licchavi—or even pre-Licchavi—period where the child is not present, and they certainly reveal the popularity of the mother goddess cult in the early centuries of the Christian era.

The Patan Hāritī or Ajiṁa is more elaborate, although the principal figure is considerably damaged (Fig. 80). The goddess here is gracefully seated in *lalitāsana* in what appears to be a mountainous setting. Her children are busy around her, one engaged in playing with an animal. Once again this playfulness of the children is somewhat reminiscent of Gandhāran reliefs, but the cherubic boys are typically Nepali. They may be seen in many other sculptures but most notably in the magnificent Kālīyadamana sculpture in Hanuman Dhoka[69] and the hovering *devaputras* in the Nativity relief (Fig. 60).

Although several other sculptures portraying goddesses can be attributed to the Licchavi period, none of these may, with any certainty, be characterized as specifically Buddhist. The Deo Patan Devī, now in a private collection in the United States (Fig. 81), once stood close to the Nativity relief and were it possible to firmly establish its context it may have been recognized as one of the earliest representations of Tārā in Nepal. However, such a method is a dangerous one, for as Hsüan tsang observed even in the seventh century the temple of the Hindus and the Buddhists touched one another.

Notwithstanding the fact that there is no epigraphic or artistic evidence to show whether Tārā was definitely known in Licchavi Nepal, a passage in the *Mañjuśrīmulakalpa* does include her as a goddess revered in the country.[70] It is curious that Tārā, who is described as *paṇḍaravāsinī* (dweller of the mountain), is mentioned along with Śitalā, the Brāhmanical goddess of smallpox and Mahāśvetā, a name of Pārvatī, as the three important female deities.

Most scholars agree that the charming bronze in the Bickford collection (Fig. 82) is a pre-tenth century work. Whether the lady represents Tārā or not is difficult to determine since she has no recognizable emblems. But usually such isolated bronze figures do portray the Buddhist goddess Tārā rather than the Brāhmanical Pārvatī or Śrī-Lakṣmī. A second bronze that may be identified as Tārā with greater assurance and may well belong to the Licchavi period is that in the Swali collection in Bombay (Fig. 83). Here the goddess holds a lotus with her left hand, a distinctive emblem of Tārā, while the right is engaged in displaying the *varadamudrā*. Both conceptually and iconographically Tārā is the female counterpart of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara.

More exciting, however, are the many fragmentary reliefs that may be seen arbitrarily stuck on later structures. One of the earliest is a sort of a lintel now preserved in the National Museum (Fig. 84). A large number adorn the base of the Cha bahil stūpa (Figs. 85-87), while others are fixed to the stūpa at Tukan bahal in Kathmandu (Figs. 88-89), and still others form the flight of steps leading to the sanctum of a Brāhmanical temple in Deo Patan (Fig. 90).

A number of the reliefs represent the Buddhist symbols, such as the *tri-ratna*, the flaming conch shell, vase with lotus, and the wheel. The wheel particularly appears as a popular symbol, and justifiably so. In a number of instances the wheel is flanked by the confronted deer, whose necks are curiously but invariably adorned with flying scarves. These deer are among rare animal studies in Licchavi Nepal and have been rendered with great economy of form but with astonishing sensitivity.

The majority of the fragments depict both male and female devotees, either seated or kneeling, and bringing humble offerings to now lost images of the Buddha. Their attitude is one of supplication or adoration and their alluring forms have invariably been rendered with great delicacy and refinement. In their humility and devotion they express articulately the spirit of gentility and calm repose that one associates usually with a Buddhist ambience. What is remarkable about these reliefs is the persistent application of the rocky background. No doubt here the sculptors were influenced by their mountainous surroundings, and the figures, although depicted as ideal types, likely portray the donors responsible for the specific donations.

The same stylistic norms visible in Indian reliefs of the Gupta period, such as at Nachna Kuthara, Bhumara, or Chandimau, have also been applied to these figures. Although the artists have repeatedly employed certain stereotyped formulae, that they were adept at rendering the human body with confidence is self-evident. As the figures bend, bow, or kneel, the sensuous elegance of the suavely modelled forms is palpably manifest. The silhouette is defined with severe economy and yet the forms are amply endowed. It is indeed amazing how persistently Buddhist art has employed voluptuous imagery while the doctrinaire position was to eschew the world of senses. Perhaps this is why the philosopher-poet Dharmakirti wrote:

Had the Creator once seen her he would never have let her go;
This gazelle-eyed beauty
with face as golden as saffron-paste.
Again, had he closed his eyes he could never have made such features.
From which we see
that the Buddhist doctrine is best:
that all is uncreated.[71]

Conclusion

The Paśupatināth inscription of Jayadeva II traces the ancestry of the Licchavi dynasty to the eponymous hero Supuṣpa of Pātaliputra in India. The Indian Licchavis, it is well known, were intimately associated with the Buddha and were distinguished followers of the faith. The attitude of the Nepali Licchavis towards Buddhism is not always explicit, but generally, it may be surmised that while some of the early Licchavi princes were definitely Buddhists, others may have actively patronized the monastic establishments. If, indeed, Śivadeva I founded a monastery, he may well have retired to it after Aṁśuvarman seized the throne and compelled him to abdicate.

At any rate it is clear from the epigraphs that the monastery was the principal centre for the dissemination of Buddhism in Licchavi Nepal. It is also probable that the monasteries formed the strong and centralized organizations which played a significant role in state politics. The Pāśupatas may well have been their antagonists and ultimately proved to be more influential in both religious and political matters.

All available evidence indicates that both Śrāvakayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism were familiar in the valley. Specifically, we know of at least three sects that were well established, such as the Mahāsāṅghikas, the Mādhyamikas and the Caturviṁśa Mahāyānists. There is no cogent evidence at present to demonstrate that Vajrayāna or Tantrayāna Buddhism had struck deep roots into the soil in Licchavi Nepal. There were at least a dozen important monasteries peopled by monks of both sexes, and this very likely indicates that a strong lay congregation sustained the monasteries. The monasteries appear also to have been supported by members of the royal family.

Although by the sixth century the Buddha image was already adorning temples and monastic halls, the stūpa or the caitya continued to retain its importance, as it still does today. A large number of Licchavi caityas may still be seen, particularly in Kathmandu, Deo Patan, and Patan, and some of them continue to be worshipped. Generally, they are of the same basic pattern, the domes being perfectly spherical in shape, and with a profusion of ornamentation in their lower sections. While their closest parallels may be seen in Gandhāra, and despite the fact that elements of design were borrowed from the repertoire of the Gupta artists, the Licchavi caityas are local in both their form and expression.

On the whole the Buddhist pantheon in Licchavi Nepal appears to have been rather limited. The two most important luminaries were Śākyamuni and the Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi or Avalokiteśvara. Also well known was the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi, while the extant evidence does not reveal an overwhelming popularity for the cult of Maitreya, the future Buddha. The tutelary goddess Hāritī was widely worshipped and this may have been due to the existence of some form of a local Mother goddess cult. In general, therefore, the thematic content of Buddhist art in Licchavi Nepal was somewhat limited with little emphasis on narrative subjects.

That the local sculptors were familiar with the heroic style, as expressed by artists of Kuṣāṇa Mathura, is evident from the Hāritī images as well as from the early Bodhisattva figure. After the fourth century the artists seem to have been influenced profoundly by the more lyrical Gupta style of Uttar Pradesh, although their familiarity with the western Deccani sites is attested at least by certain iconographic traits. While influences from contemporary India are undeniable, it is also manifestly clear that no single Indian stylistic idiom is easily discernible. Rather, the Nepali sculptors by the seventh century had succeeded completely in assimilating the major stylistic traits of "Madhyadeśa" and with great facility and ingenuity recreated their own local idiom.

As in India, art in Nepal also has largely remained anonymous. Not a single Nepali sculptor of the Licchavi period is known by name. Possibly the monasteries did employ artists from India, but it is remarkable that with the exception of a solitary Śaiva head in the Sikri sandstone no Indian sculpture has so far been found in Nepal. Bronzes may easily have been carried across the difficult mountain terrain, but while at least two Nepali bronzes were actually excavated in Nalanda, no Indian bronzes, either Gupta or Pāla, have yet been discovered in the valley. However, the principal carriers of the Indian styles into the country must have been bronze figures and terracotta plaques, brought back by itinerant monks, merchants and pilgrims.

Although this essay has been limited to the art that was created to serve specifically the Buddhist faith, it must be remembered that the same basic style was also applied to Brāhmanical art. Even if we know nothing about the individual artists, it is quite clear that they formed a professional class, and their personal religious beliefs had little or nothing to do with their vocational interests. The sculptors responsible for the Dhvaka baha caitya may well have been employed in the gigantic task of hewing the mammoth images of Viṣṇu commissioned by King Viṣṇugupta. Just as moths are fatally attracted to the candle, artists and craftsmen in all traditional societies have always gravitated towards the economic source or the patron. During the Malla period as well, the same styles, whether in painting, sculpture or architecture, were employed with equal facility for Buddhist as well as Brāhmanical temples. Hsüan-tsang's statement that the temples of the Hindus and the Buddhists in Nepal touch one another is, therefore, true in more sense than one.

Primarily, the sculptor in Licchavi Nepal, as in India, was a craftsman and, hence, a product of strong traditions. In fashioning an image of the Buddha it was not expected of him to innovate forms or create his own impression of what the Buddha looked like. His task was to render an image that agreed with the liturgic sanctions and at the same time was beautiful enough to inspire the thousands of devotees for whom the image was a reality. And yet as we look at the many images of the Buddha or of Padmapāṇi created by the sculptors it is evident that each object, despite the applications of precisely the same canons, has a distinct personality. And that distinctiveness must be attributed to the creative spark that is innate in every artist.

References

[1] A. Foucher, *Etude sur iconographie Bouddhique de l'Inde*, Paris, 1900, p. 214.

[2] G. Vajracarya, "Licchavikālka pāñchvata aprakāśita abhilekh" in *Puṇimā*. No. 8, pp. 2-4 and 6-7. The inscription is rather mutilated but as Vajracarya rightly comments it appears to be some kind of a royal panegyric (*praśasti*) On an examination of the paleography the author considers this to be an inscription of the period of Manadeva. In that case it may well be another version of the type of edict he engraved on the Changu Naravan pillar. If indeed Svayambhūnāth was already an important vihāra at the time, it would only be logical for the king to place a royal edict at the site, particularly announcing his victories over his enemies. For the second inscription see, *Abhilekh-saṁgraha*, Samsodhanamandala, Kathmandu, Pt. I, p. 34.

[3] While correctly admitting the validity of the tradition that Svayambhunāth is an ancient site, David Snellgrove (*Buddhist Himalaya*, Oxford, 1957, p. 95) comments that "the name 'self-existent' scarcely came to be applied to Buddhahood much before the sixth century". To my knowledge one of the earliest references to the "self-existent" nature of the Buddha occurs in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, which was already translated into Chinese before AD 316 [see H. Kern (tr.), *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* or *The Lotus of the True Law*, New York, 1963, pp XX and 310]. Chapter XV ends with a declaration by the Buddha that he is *lokapitā svayambhu*. It is further interesting to note that in the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* Svavambhū is said to have appeared seated upon a lotus just as Brahma is [H. P. Sastri (ed.), *The Vrihat Svayambhū Purāṇam*, Calcutta, 1894, pp 47 ff.].

[4] T. Watters, *On Yuan Chuang's Travels in India*, vol. 2, London, 1904-05, pp. 83-5.

[5] K. P. Jayaswal, "Chronology and History of Nepal" in *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, vol. XXII, pt. III, 1936, pp. 238-39.

[6] *ibid*, pp. 242-243.

[7] D. Snellgrove, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

[8] R. Gnoli (ed.), *Nepalese Inscriptions in Gupta Characters*, vol. I, Rome, 1956, p. 25.

[9] *Abhilekh-saṁgraha*, part I, pp. 29 and 33.

[10] *ibid*, p. 34.

[11] *ibid*, pt. IX, p. 18.

[12] *Puṇimā*, p. 73.

(1) Om akṣobhyamkṣobhya śitāgramurti ntathāgataṁ staumya bhitobhiramyam

(2) Samantabhadrambhuvi bhadrakāruṇa ntathaiva sannumala kirtimālinam

(3) vāva . . . mbhaktvādya tannamat Śākyamunimmmu (niśam)

(4) maitrārddha . . . . ṅga guhyadhipam vimalavajradharaṁ sahābjam

(5) saddharmaratnakusumastavakācitānga mbuddhaṁ samanta kusumannamatābjavatyām

(6) Mañjuśrīyamparamadharmavidangkumāra nnityañca susthitamatingkaruṇaikatānam

(7) mahāprajñālokakṣatabhavamahāmohatimiraṁ sukhāvatyāṁ vande satatamitābhanjinaravim

(8) salokeśaṁ Lokadhhavabhavaharapaṅkajadhara mmahāsthāmaprāpta ... snigdhamana (sam)

[13] *Lalitavistara*, ch. 15, v. 15.

[14] In verse 5 (see note 12) Mañjuśrī is referred to as a *buddha* or enlightened being. Regarding Mañjuśrī's character as a Tathāgata see E. Lamotte, "Mañjuśrī" in *T'oung Pao*, XLIX, 1-2, pp. 29 ff. In addition it may be pointed out that in the *Sukhavatīvyūha* [Sacred Books of the East, F. Max Muller (ed.), vol. XLIX, Delhi-Varanasi Patna, 1965, p. 71] the Buddha declares: "And all of them having been born there, will in proper order be born in other worlds, as Tathāgatas, called Mañjuśvara (sweet-voiced)." Thus there was at least a literary tradition of representing Mañjuśrī as a Buddha or Tathāgata.

[15] Muller (ed.), *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, p. 52.

[16] Gnoli, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

[17] *ibid.*, pp. 86, 99, 100, 102-103.

[18] For an excellent study on the religious establishments of the Licchavi period see D. Vajracarya "Licchavi-kālmā dhārmik saṁgha") *Puṇimā*, no. 24, pp. 106 ff.

[19] D. R. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, Pt. III, Calcutta, 1966, p. 116.

[20] D. Vajracarya, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

[21] Regmi, *op. cit.*, p. 116. *rājā sri dharmadeva ....rājavihāra dharmacaityatake pratiṣṭhitam*/Wright's *vaṁśāvalī* also echoes Dharmadeva's interest in Buddhism [See D. Wright (ed.), *History of Nepal*, 3rd. ed., Calcutta, 1966, p. 83].

[22] Gnoli, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

[23] Narendradeva's partiality to Paśupatināth is also recorded in the

Gopālarāja vaṁśāvalī: rājā śrī narendradeva varṣa 24 tena ca śrī Paśupatibhaṭṭārakāya anekaratna vicitrakoṣa . . . . . pradhokitam/ (See Regmi. *op. cit.*, p. 117).

24 Gnoli, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-118.

25 See note 18.

26 Gnoli, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

27 L. Petech. *Medieval History of Nepal.* Rome. 1958. pp. 179 ff. Petech, however, makes a sweeping generalization that "since the very beginning of history the rulers of Nepal were Hindus". As I have discussed in the paper this is not necessarily true.

28 Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 127. The same chronicles elsewhere states that it was Śaṅkarācārya who brought brahmins from south India. Seemingly, however, like the stories of the Buddha's and Aśoka's visits to the valley, that of Śaṅkarācārya is also a pious fabrication.

29 *Abhilekh-saṁgraha*, pt. V, p. 8.

30 Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-39.

31 S. Beal, *Travels of Hiouen Thsang*, Calcutta, 1958, vol. I, p. 70.

32 J. Marshall. *A Guide to Taxila*. Cambridge. 4th Ed., 1960. Pl. XVII. For other similar examples, generally corresponding with the circular Nepali examples, see A. Grünwedel, *Buddhist Art in India*, London, 2nd ed., 1965, figs. 106, 107.

33 Regarding *caumukha* or *caturmukha* shrines see. U. P. Shah, *Studies in Jaina Art*. Benares. 1955. pp. 22 23, 95, 117, 120. For a similar Buddhist shrine see. P Chandra. *Stone Sculpture in the Allahabad Museum.* Poona. 1970. Pl. LXXXII. no. 225. p. 98. The niches containing four images of the Buddha in this fifth century shrine are remarkably like those in the Dhvaka baha caitya. That such shrines were familiar in Gupta India is also evident from Fa-hsien's accounts. Describing a processional shrine he witnessed in Magadha. Fa hsien has the following comments: "On the four sides are niches, with a Buddha seated in each, and a Bodhisattva standing in attendance on him" (J. Legge, *op. cit.*, p. 79). An earlier prototype for such a shrine may be seen in J. Ph. Vogel. *Archeological Museum at Mathura*, Delhi, 1971. Pl. IV. The caitya is of the Kusāna period and incidentally four identical Tathāgatas are represented in niches on the four sides.

34 S. Kramrisch, *The Art of Nepal*, New York. 1964, p 28.

35 Gnoli, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

36 I visited the modern structure that goes by the name of Gana baha soon after it was built in 1966. At that time the bronze images, along with the urn and the coins, were shown to me by the resident monk. The present whereabouts of these objects are not known and it is remarkable that during the digging for the foundations, the Department of Archeology in Nepal did not make any attempt to preserve the site or excavate it scientifically

37 For the text of the Chapatol inscription, see *Abilekh-saṁgraha*, part V, p. 8. The inscription is interesting in the sense that it records gifts made by Mṛgi for the repairs of a temple of the Buddha and for the saṁgha of female monks belonging to the sect of caturviṁśa mahāyāna. It is interesting to note that the word used to describe the sanctum is *gandhakuṭī*, which is also met with in Indian Buddhist inscriptions of the Gupta period.

38 The other inscribed gilt bronze, probably of the seventh century, is now in the collection of Mr. Ben Heller of New York.

39 Regmi, *op. cit.*, p. 2. Because the temple was shut everytime I visited it I could not examine the inscription personally.

40 See Petech, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

41 *Art of India*, University Gallery, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1969, p. 25, fig. 11.

42 See S. Winner, "From Gupta to Pāla Sculpture", in *Artibus Asiae*, XXV, 1962, figs. 14, 15, 19, 20, and 22.

43 S. K. Saraswati, *Early Sculpture of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1962, figs. 12, 22 and 23.

44 The combined flame and bead motif definitely appears in Nepal in seventh century steles with inscriptions. I have discussed and illustrated the evidence in my forthcoming book on Nepali Sculpture being published by Brill of Leiden.

45 A well-known instance of such persistence of stylistic traits occurs in the Boston Padmapāṇi, which Coomaraswamy once dated to the ninth century (see, P. Pal. "Three Dated Nepali Bronzes and their stylistic significance" in *Archives of Asian Art*, XXV, 1971-72, pp. 58 ff).

46 The article has since been reprinted. See H. Goetz, "Early Indian Sculptures from Nepal" in *Studies in the History and Art of Kashmir and the Indian Himalayas*. Wiesbaden. 1969., pl. XLVII. For other glaring misattributions by Dr. Goetz, see pl. XLVIII and the Tārā in pl. XLIX. All three sculptures are definitely of the Malla period.

47 D. R. Regmi. *Medieval Nepal*, pt. I, Calcutta, 1965, pl. 1 and E. and R. L. Waldschmidt. *Nepal*, New York, 1970, fig. XIX.

48 This and other such stylistic problems in Nepal have been fully discussed in my forthcoming book on Nepali sculpture.

49 *Himalayan Art*, Greenwich (Conn.), 1968, p 203.

50 Kern, *op. cit.*, p. 417. "At one time standing to the right, at another to the left of the Chief Amitâbha, whom he is fanning, he by dint of meditation, like a phantom, in all regions honours the Gina." It is indeed amazing how close this description is to the typical trinity one meets with in Buddhist steles of the Kuṣāna period from Mathura. Often in such steles the central Tathagata is flanked by two identical Bodhisattvas who swing the flywhisk. In the Ajanta and Kanheri caves we also witness similar compositions where the identity of the two flanking Bodhisattvas is often not clearly distinguished. It may be mentioned further that in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* it is further stated that Amitâbha as well as the Bodhisattvas and other Jinas should be seated on "undefiled cups of lotuses" (p 417). Indeed, frequently in Gandhāra in the so-called theophoany reliefs the lotuses look literally like cups.

51 Kramrisch, *op cit.*, pp. 17 and 19.

52 *Nepalese Art*, Kathmandu, 1966, III/2, p. 76.
Waldschmidt, *op cit.*, fig. 10.

53 Kramrisch, *op. cit.*, fig. 11: *Nepalese Art*, p. 78: Waldschmidt, *op. cit.*, fig. 13: Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

54 Max Muller, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.

55 Snellgrove, *op. cit.*, p 62.

56 *En passant* it may be pointed out that similar car-festivals or *rathayātrā* appear to have been quite popular with the Buddhists in Gupta India Fa hsien witnessed two such festivals during his travels, one in Khotan and the other in Magadha (see Legge, *op. cit.*, pp. 19 and 79). It is of further interest to note that with regard to the Khotanese festival, the pilgrim says: "The (chief) image stood in the middle of the car, with two Bodhisattvas in attendance on it . . . . all brilliantly carved in gold and silver."

57 Indeed, that the cult of Avalokiteśvara was already popular before A.D. 400 as evident both from the *Saddharmapundarika* and Fa hsien's accounts.

58 For an excellent summary of such material see. M. T. de Mallman. *Introduction a l'etude d'Avalokiteśvara*, Paris, 1967, the first three parts. That Avalokiteśvara was already regarded as the great saviour during travel is also evident from Fa hsien's accounts. While the pilgrim was sailing from Ceylon back to his own country, twice the ship encountered storms and on both occasions the pilgrim invoked Avalokiteśvara and was saved (Legge, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-113).

59 Kern, *op. cit.*, p. 409

60 D. H. H. Ingalls (tr.). *An Anthology of Sanskrit Court Poetry*. Cambridge (Mass.), p. 65.

61 *ibid.*, p. 64.

62 *ibid.*, p. 20.

63 Kramrisch, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 38.

64 Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, pt. I, pl. 5.

65 Ingalls, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

66 Kramrisch, *op. cit.*, fig. 6.

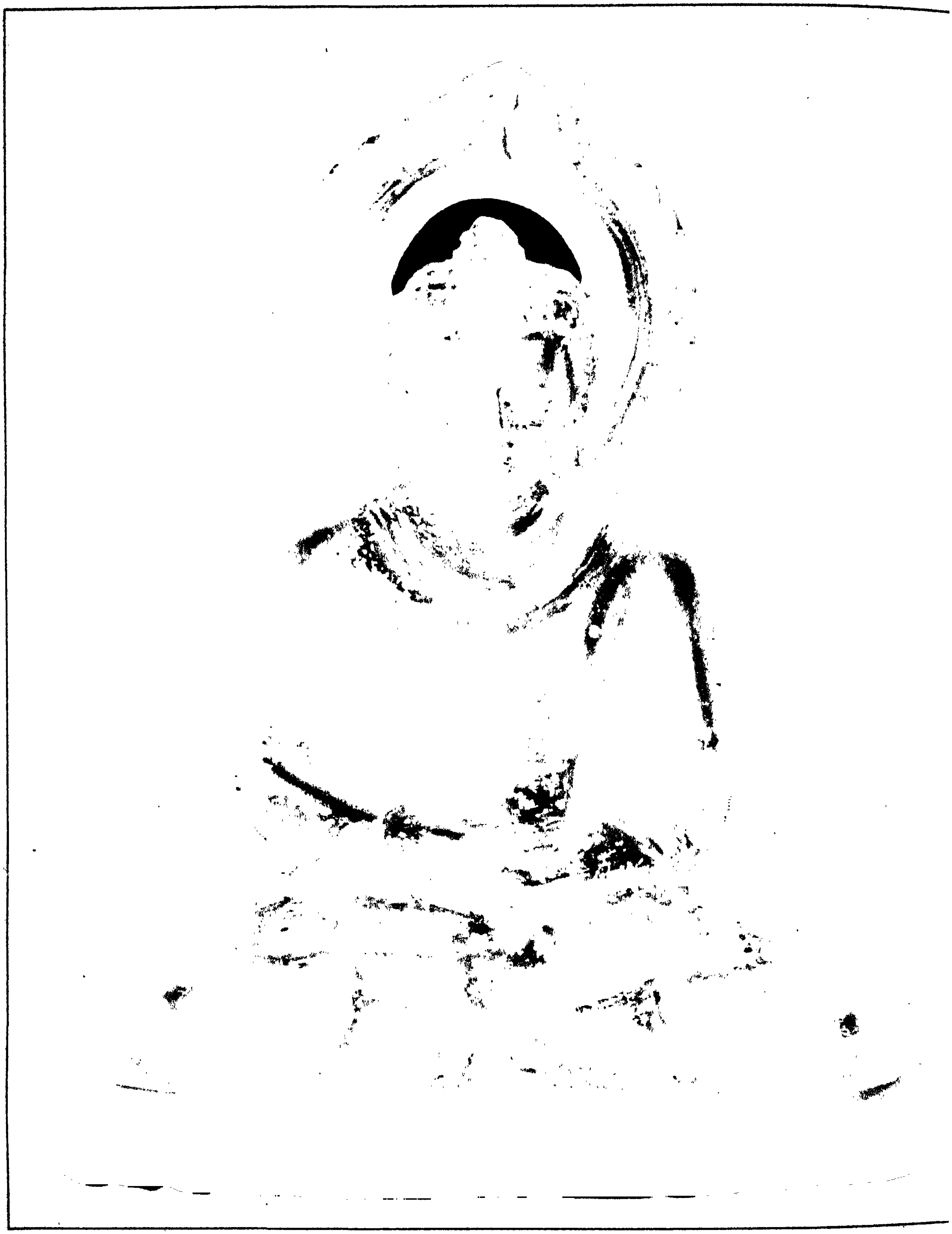
67 It may be pointed out that Śītalā is the first goddess mentioned in a verse in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* as being famous in Nepal, *tatra mantrāśu siddhyanti śītalā śāntikapauṣṭikā //*
(As quoted by Jayaswal, *op cit.*, p. 211). Thus it is not improbable that the same goddess that was known as Hārīti generally in the Indian Buddhist world was regarded as Śītalā in Nepal even as early as the Licchavi period.

68 Cf. N. P. Joshi, *Mathura Sculptures*, Mathura, 1966, fig. 40.

69 P. Pal, *Vaiṣṇava Iconology in Nepal*. Calcutta. 1970. fig. 51.

70 *tārā ca lokavikkhyātā devī pandaravāsinī / mahāśvetā parahitodyuktā akhinnamanasāṁ sadā //*
As quoted by Jayaswal, *op cit.*, p. 212.

71 Ingalls, *op. cit.*, p. 174.



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Haryana Heritage

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"Be sure," wrote Jamsetji Tata to his son Dorab, "to lay out wide streets planted with shady trees, every other one of a quick growing variety. Be sure that there is plenty of space for lawns and gardens".

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COVER is a montage framed around miniature paintings from a manuscript of the Bhagavata Purana *in the Kurukshetra University Library.*

The pioneer compilation about the heritage of the newly formed Haryana State would not have been possible but for the initiative of Shri S. K. Misra, who loaned the services of Shri R. S. Bisht of the Department of Archaeology, Haryana, to make a survey of the surviving remains and monuments along with the MARG research team.

During the tour, Shri Ashok Pahwa, Director, Public Relations, gave generous facilities in every District of Haryana, and lent a liaison Officer, Shri M. L. Gupta, who helped in all those miscellaneous situations contingent upon amateur archaeology in a relatively unmapped area, Shri V. P. Dhamija, Chief Architect, Haryana, guided the research team to contemporary constructions.

Shri Chakravati, Governor of Haryana, kindly gave permission to photograph sculptures kept in Raj Bhavan, Chandigarh.

The textual notes have been written by Shri R. S. Bisht in collaboration with the Editor.

The photography has been done by D. H. Sahiar to which have been added six photographs from the Department of Archaeology, Haryana.

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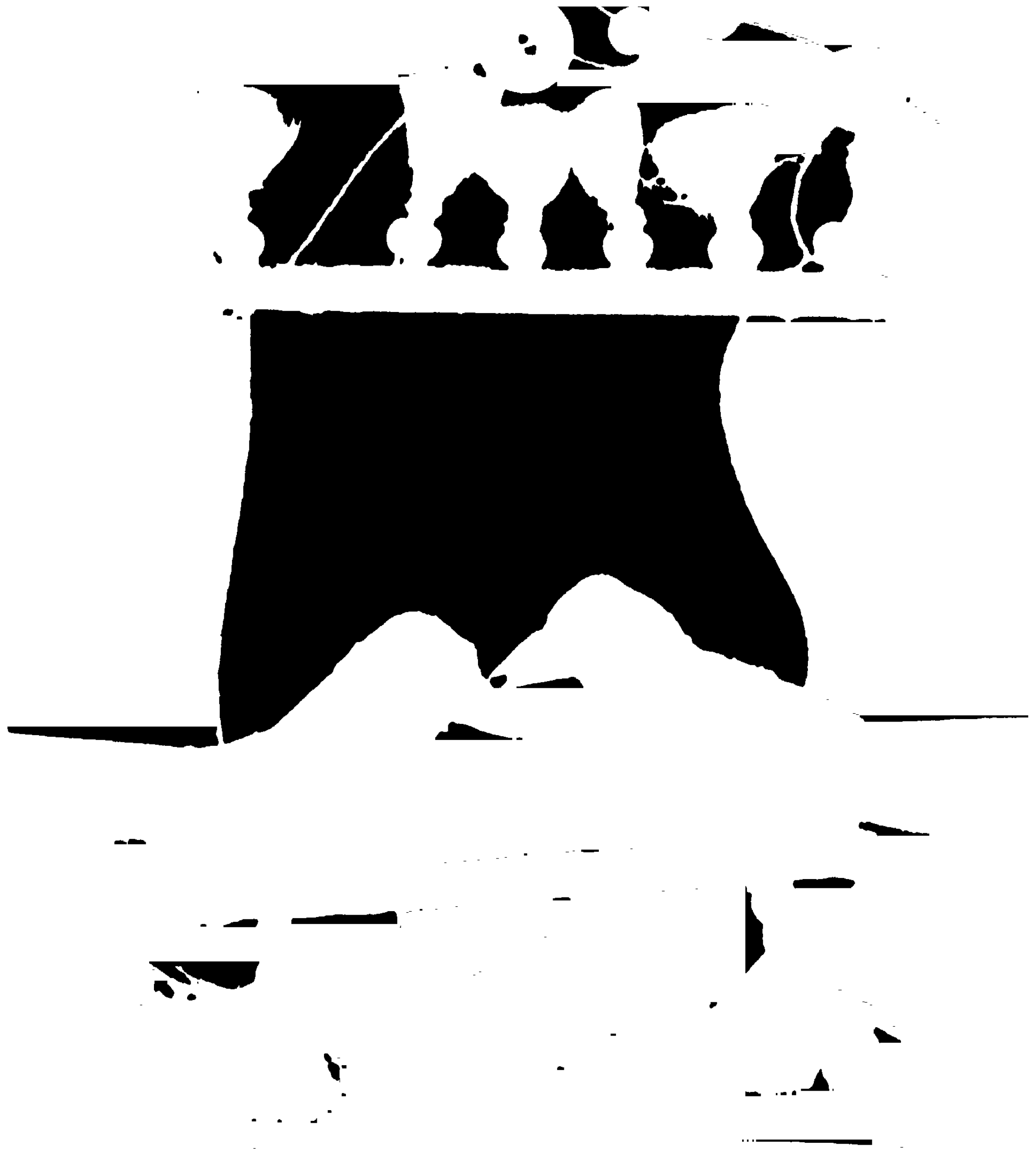
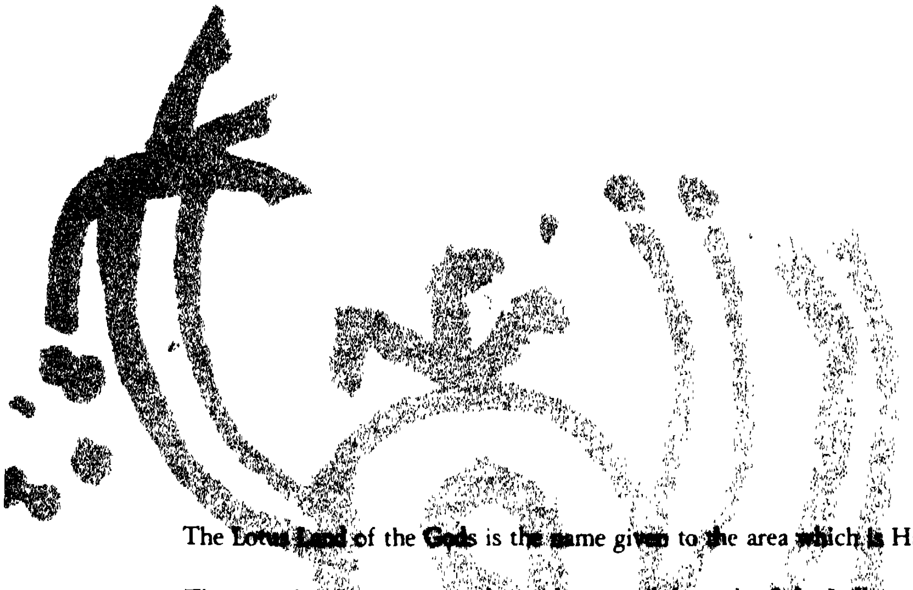


Be ye a lamp unto yourself, O Ananda — TATA CHEMICALS

Haryana Heritage



The Lotus Land of the Gods is the name given to the area which is Haryana today.

The metaphor is appropriate, because many of the gods of the Indian pantheon, conceived during the period of the Aryan-Dravidian synthesis, took their shape and form in this landscape. One myth has it that Prajapati created the world and the four castes at Prithudaka—the contemporary Pehoa. Another legend traces the birth of Brahma to the place called Brahmayoni, in the same place. And it was in these surroundings, on the banks of the now extinct river, Saraswati, where Brahma is supposed to have organised creation.

The fertility of the soil, watered by the Jamuna on one side and the Saraswati on the other, is referred to in the *Rig Veda.*

And it was, suggested the late Prof. D. D. Kosambi, the argument over the possession of the rich iron ore mines in the south-west area, the slate and the marble and other precious stones, that caused the Mahabharata war.

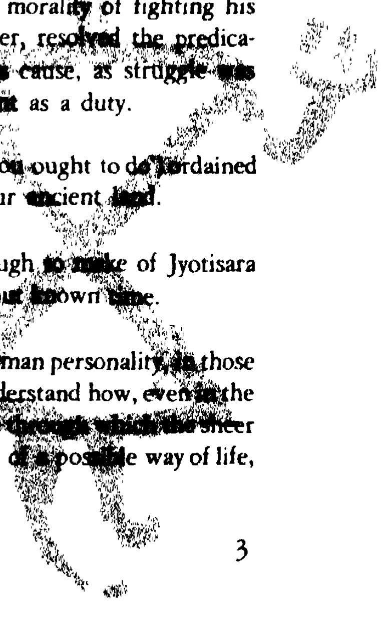
Whatever may be the fantasies of the ancient peoples, which inspired the romances of the gods and heroes, the facts of man's advance to consciousness have revealed decisive moments of awareness in the region, which helped to build the patterns of several resilient civilisations.

Apart from the fantastic discovery that one of the earliest near *homo sapiens*, the ape man, roamed in the Haryana Shiwaliks and became emergent man here, one of the most decisive arguments of history took place in Jyotisar, Prince Arjuna of the Pandavas was in great doubt about the morality of fighting his hundred Kuru cousins. The hero-king-god Krishna, symbolically turned charioteer, resolved the predicament for his devotee by deciding that the Pandavas should fight for the righteous cause, as struggle was essential to life, though the fight should be conducted with the utmost detachment as a duty.

Long before the categorical imperative of Immanuel Kant ('you ought to do what you ought to do') ordained in the renascent world of Europe, the necessity of action was thus enjoined on our ancient land.

The significance of this morality for subsequent Indian history, has been deep enough to make of Jyotisara shrine and nearby Kurukshetra a place of pilgrimage for millions of people throughout known time.

If we analyse the dim areas of folk consciousness and study the evolution of the human personality, in those urges which make men and women go on pilgrimage to legendary sites, we might understand how, even in the uninformed body, there is a cavity in the heart, or light in the eyes, or a brain wave through which the sheer biology of the human structure and its inherent rhythmic flow compels glimmering of a possible way of life, in certain intense moments of illumination, self-awareness or realisation.



We are not quite sure, even today, inspite of the advance of the sciences, exactly how the breakthrough from primaeval consciousness, through the periods of ratiocination, to intuitive understanding, takes place. Bu it is quite clear that the psycho-social phenomena, which has been seen in every civilisation, and is vaguel called culture, does register the advance from one vantage point of insight to the other, even in a worl governed by outside contingencies.

Thus, parallel with the finds of the remnants from Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Rupar, Maheshwar, Rakhiojarh and Banawali in Hissar District, Navdatoli and Lothal complex, in Mitathal near Bhiwani and Kalibangan in Ganganagar District, Rajasthan, we see the advance of practical judgement of the hands, attained by the middl of the 3rd millinium B.C. (c.2400-c.2300): Brick making and copper smelting and the conversion of thes materials in the elaboration of utilities of living was already known.

The mature Harappan culture (c. 2300 B.C. to 1800 B.C.) and the late Harappan culture (c. 1800-1600 B.C.) in Mitathal give evidence of an organised civilisation based on the use of pottery for cooking, decorations wit beads, painting of objects, the building of houses in a planned manner for life, as well as in cemeterie for death.

Of the Mahabharata period, apart from evidence of an elaborate social order based on the idea of king of kings, no actual symbols are left; but there is poetry of the highest subtlety, with variegated analysis of emotions an ideas and actions, in this great national epic.

The continuity of the past was maintained not only through the old places of pilgrimage, but by the buildin of new ones, as at Tosham in classical antiquity, and several monuments in medieval period.

In the mid-medieval period, there were copious temple buildings, from Panchkula in the Shiwaliks to Pehoa and further south, as well as various fortifications on the highways, to meet the Central Asian onslaughts on India.

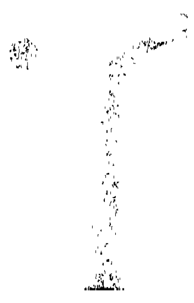
After the battle of Tarnori in 1191 A.D., when the Pathans, under Muhammad Ghori and Qutb-ud-Din Aibak, prevailed over Prithvi Raj Chauhan, the cross fertilisation of Hindu and Islamic design went ahead, all the way from Karnal to Narnaul.

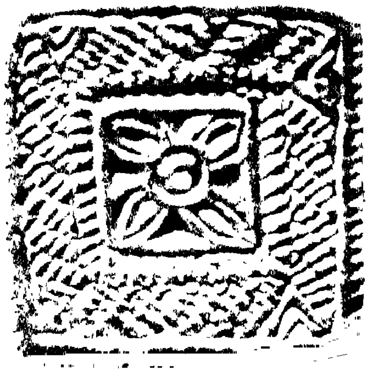
The links in the chain of causality from the pre-historic periods till today, have thus been maintained by the undying talents of the folk, who are emergent today from the rural consciousness of 3000 years ago to the use of the machine in south Haryana.

The real relevance of the old values in our estimate, is only in the inspiration it gives for the present. We do not worship the past for the sake of the past. We reveal the imaginative skills of the artisans to show the nature of insight into the process of renewal, growth and advance, from the old to the new tools.

The illumination must come today that the choice of our future 'fate' cannot be through the intervention of the gods, as in the life of the ancient heroes, but in the will of men to make themselves.

Pre-Historic





2

1 Children's toy whistle made on the fantasy of the whistling boy bird. Abstraction of form shows advance concircularisation.

2 A seal with triangular and square design with lotus in the middle, probably symbol of ritual altar.

1. Pre-Harappan Culture (c. 2500 B.C.-2300 B.C.)

The first settlers of the site belonged to the Copper-Bronze age community previously identified at Kalibangan in north Rajasthan and Mitathal, district Bhiwani. Their material culture is found scattered far and wide in Haryana. They had achieved high degree of cultural advancement. They knew the art of pottery. A wide range of fabrics, as many as six, identical with those found at Kalibangan, fairly illustrate their developed ceramic art. A wide range of shapes and designs indicate toward their socio-economic pattern and aesthetic taste. Among the miscellany of items recovered from excavations, there are beads of gold, lapis lazuli, chalcedonic stones, steatite and clay; copper objects; terracotta bangles and agate blades.

There are partially exposed two massive mud-brick structures. It is yet to be seen if those formed part of defences or some such important buildings. It is interesting to note that the sizes of bricks, 10 x 20 x 30 cm. and 13 x 26 x 39, conform to their traditional ratio of 1: 2: 3, as met with at Kalibangan.

Banawali, District Hissar

Recent excavation at Banawali, tehsil Fatehabad, district Hissar, conducted by the Department of Archaeology, Haryana, under the supervision of Shri R. S. Bisht, has brought into light one of the most important town sites of pre-Harappan and Harappan cultures in the sub-continent. The site most probably lies in the ancient bed of the dead Saraswati.

The mound is spread over an area of about 600 x 400 metres and rises to a height of more than ten metres from the surrounding ground level. The archaeological operations have shed fresh light on the regional variations and ramifications in the Indus and pre-Indus cultures of the upper middle course of the Saraswati.

Mitathal, District Bhiwani

(c. 2400 B.C. to 2300 B.C. – 2300 B.C. to 1800 B.C.)

The protohistoric site of Mitathal (76° 12' E. Lat. 28° 87' N. Long.), lying about 11 km. to the north-west of Bhiwani, the district headquarters, was subjected to archaeological excavations in 1968. The results obtained throw welcome light on the Copper-Bronze age culture-complex of the Indo-Gangetic Divide of the 3rd-2nd millennia B.C. It provides a continuous cultural sequence from pre-Harappan to late Harappan times.

There are two low mounds of modest size.

The smaller mound, measuring 150 x 130 metres, rising to a height of 5 meters, lies on the west. The bigger one is on the east, about 300 x 175 metres in expanse and nearly 3 meters in height. Both possibly conceal. the 'citadel' and 'lower city', conforming to the classical Harappan town-planning. The excavators believe that the site once lay on the bank of river Yamuna, which has since gradually moved away towards the east.

The site came into light for the first time in 1913, when a hoard of the coins of Samudragupta, one of the most illustrious kings of the Gupta dynasty (third to fifth century A.D.), was found here. During the years of 1965 to 1967, beads and curious copper hoard implements were discovered, promising the yield of more prospective protohistoric material.

The excavations of 1968 have revealed a two-folk culture sequence, namely, period I and II. The latter is further sub-divided into two phases: IIA and IIB. These divisions or sub-divisions represent preceding, mature and late Harappan cultures, respectively.

The Pre-Harappan Culture

(c. 2400 B.C. to 2300 B.C.)

On the evidence provided by Mitathal Banawali and Kalibangan (the latter in the Ganganagar district in north Rajasthan), the pre-Harappan folk seem to have attained a fair degree of advance by the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C They had acquired the knowledge of copper smelting. The size of the mud bricks, used in construction is 10 x 12 x 30 cm. Doubtless, the ancestry of this culture lies farther west in the Indus plain and the Baluch and the Afghan hills.

2. Harappan Culture (c. 2300-1800 B.C.)

The Harappans seem to have overcome the pre-Harappans when the latter were still in the prime of youth. However, unlike in Sindh and Panjab, here both traditions continued side by side, and this possibly had to give birth to a hybrid culture which ultimately had had its sway after the hey day of the Harappans.

The preliminary work has amply shown that the Indus folk laid out their town in their classical pattern of grid-iron planning. During the course of present excavations, a piazza was exposed, where roads and lanes coming from cardinal directions meet. The planning did not change for at least five successive phases, which could be exposed in the first session of work. Among excavated structures there were walls of house blocks, massive mud-brick platforms, drains, ovens and hearths. Mostly sun-dried mud-bricks were used for construction. Baked bricks were employed in drains and at such places where the use of water was frequent. The sizes of bricks varied from 6½ x 13 x 26 cm. to 11 x 22 x 44 cm. and the ratio amazingly remained 1: 2: 4—a practice which was scrupulously followed by the Harappans throughout the vast expanse of space and time.

There have also been discerned various road levels on which sometimes ancient cart tracks were clearly distinct, and their width amazingly conformed to the space covered by the present day bullock carts.

Although the main ceramic industry of the period (both painted and plain) was the characteristic Harappan the pre-Harappan pottery, cream-slipped ware and a distinct red ware, employing pinched or incised decoration, or both, have also been found.

The other interesting finds include: gold beads and pieces; arrow heads, razor blade, sickle hook, bead, chisels and nails of copper and bronze; beads of semi-precious stones, faience, steatite, shell and clay; and terracotta bangles, cakes, nodules, idlis, marbles, figurines, toy cart frames and wheels and sherds and cakes bearing Harappan characters and graffiti.

The defences and a separate citadel or acropolis, the possibilities of which are quite strong, can be determined by further work at the site.

Late Harappan Period (c. 1800-1600 B.C.)

During this phase there set in overall degeneration, perhaps as the result of worldwide recession in trade and commerce, in face of unstable political conditions, which seem to have prevailed around 1800 B.C., when the business contacts with the Persian Gulf, Mesopotamia and Egypt seems to have been suddenly severed.

Subsequently, a miscellany of local cultures appeared on the Indian scene. These are pointers to the immigration of various folks, who might have been responsible, to a large extent, for a weakened north-west.

One such group is known to archaeology as the Cemetery 'H'. *Homo sapiens*, seem to have made their debut at Mitathal about that time.

The decay of Harappan traditions, along with some continued pre-Harappan elements, at Mitathal, got mixed up with invading cultures as is shown by an alien pottery.

This, in turn, seems to have given some fillip to the dying culture, as is manifest in the sudden emergence of paintings on pots. What is most important, however, in the period II B, is the yield of some curious Copper Hoard implements, which may be associable with the late Harappan period on circumstantial ground.

In short, Mitathal has assumed importance on several accounts:

> *Firstly*, it is the most easternly classical town site hitherto discovered in the north.
>
> *Secondly*, it reveals a continuous habitation from pre-Indus to post-Indus periods, covering a period of a thousand years.
>
> *Thirdly*, its proximity to the Aravali outspurs, arouses curiosity about whether or not the copper fields of the northern Vindhyas were tapped by those proto-historic people.
>
> *Fourthly*, Mitathal can help us to understand in a better perspective, the lesser known localised chalcolithic cultures of the Gangetic delta.

Proto-Historic Mound near Daulatpur, District Ambala
(2000 B.C.-1500 B.C.)

The ancient mound near the village Daulatpur is of a moderate size; rising to a height of nearly 6 m. it lies by the side of a nullah, branching off from the Chitang (ancient Drishadvati). It is approached via Kurukshetra-Saharanpur road and is about 15 kms. from Thanesar.

The earliest settlement (Pdi) at the site represents a late phase of Indus Civilisation (c. 2000 B.C.-c. 1500 B.C.) The period was characterised by the use of a typical sturdy, red coloured pottery, painted in black and decorated with geometric and linear designs. The evalued shapes, inferior treatment of the surface and the simpler and fewer decorations on the pottery, indicate a decadent stage of the Indus culture. The material equipment of the period included the remains of round ovens, charred grains, grinding stones, bone engravers and copper bangles. The copper fish-holes and points suggest that hunting and fishing supplemented the food supply of the people. The folk in this period decorated their persons with ornaments, like bangles of faience and terracotta and beads of semi-precious stones.

Historical

1. Excavations at Raja Karna ka Qila (c. 400 B.C.-300 A.D.)

The mound adjacent to the Kurukshetra University campus, locally known as Raja Karna ka Qila is traditionally connected with the epic period.

The restricted work at the site has revealed eleven structural phases, ranging in date from c. 400 B.C. to 300 A.D.

The total habitational accumulation falls into three periods.

The earliest settlement (period I), in the area of excavation, seems to have begun about 400 B.C. The housing actually shows four phases of construction. The structures were made of large sized mud bricks, measuring 50 cms. in length. The use of burnt brick is attested to by the occurrence of brick-bats. Besides, the rare Northern Black polished ware pottery of this period, characterised by its shining black surface, early historic red ware, and shreds of coarse grey ware, has also been recovered.

The next (period II) covers a span of about 400 years, beginning from c. 100 B.C. The sub-period was distinguished by the occurrence of the red polished ware. In all seven structural phases were encountered in this period. Generally, mud bricks (size 37 x 23 x 7 cms.) have been used in the construction of houses, but in the upper levels walls of burnt bricks (size 37 x 23 x 7 cms.) have been encountered as also remains of hearths (chulhas) have been noticed. A room had a mud brick pillar in its centre, for supporting the rafter, flanked by beams on either side and represented typical plan of "Dukharia Poli" of the contemporary villages in the area.

The pottery of this period, though mostly unpainted was decorated with various stamped designs such as Chakra, Nandipada and other flora motifs. The other finds of the period, included early historic copper coins, ornaments comprising beads of semi-precious stones, shells and terracotta, shell bangles, miscellaneous terracotta objects including animal figurines, toy cartwheels, dabber blades, sharpners etc., small rod and blade piece in copper and a variety of household iron and stone objects. The most outstanding finds are the clay sealings, bearing legends in Brahmi script of the early centuries of the Christian era.

The site seems to have remained deserted for a long time after c. third century A.D. till it was reoccupied in late medieval times in period III.

The Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra has conducted the excavation at the site during 1970-71 and 1971-72.

2. Topra-Delhi Pillar of Asoka (272-232 B.C.)

The lustrous buff stone pillar, presently standing majestically on the top of a three-storeyed structure in the fort of Firuz Shah, was originally brought by him from Topra, a small village on the Yamuna in district Ambala, in the year 1356. Shams-i-Siraj gives a graphic detail of its transportation and ultimate transplantation at the present site.

The pillar bears the minor edicts of Asoka (272-232 B.C.) and an inscription of King Bisal Deva. The characteristic Mauryan shine of the pillar had led many early British writers to mistake it for an alloy.

3. Tosham (fourth-fifth century A.D.)

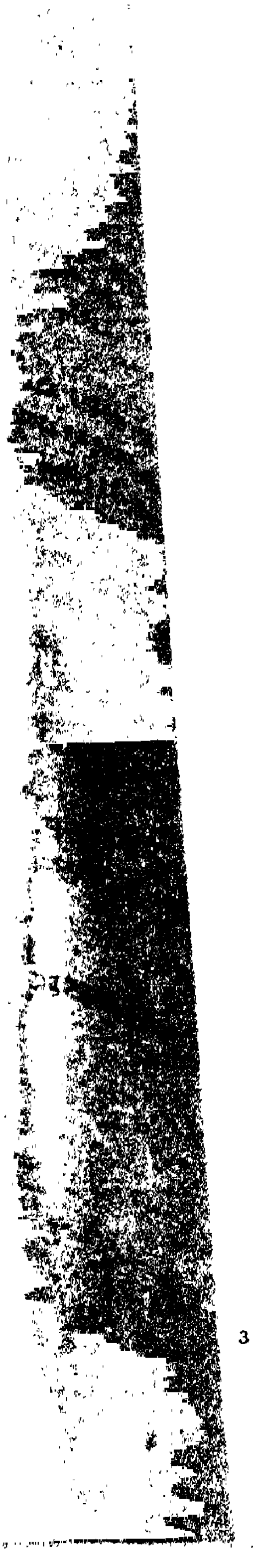
The little developing town of Tosham (28° 54'N. and 75° 56' E.) under the eastern shadow of a steep isolated hill, lies approximately 23 km. to the north-west of Bhiwani, the headquarters of the newly carved district. The very name Tosham is suggestive of its derivation from a chaste Sanskrit word.

But public memory does not go beyond the time of Rai Pithora alias King Prithvi Raj Chauhan III, who valiantly fought but lost to Muhammad Ghori in 1191 A.D.

(Continued on Page 10

3 Asokan monolithic column of sandstone. Originally brought by Firuz Shah Taghlaq. It bears an inscription of Asoka (272-232 B.C.)

4 Delhi: Smooth pillar surmounting the multi storeyed structure in the Kotla Firuz Shah. Originally planted by the Mauryan Emperor, Asoka, at Topra, a village in district Ambala



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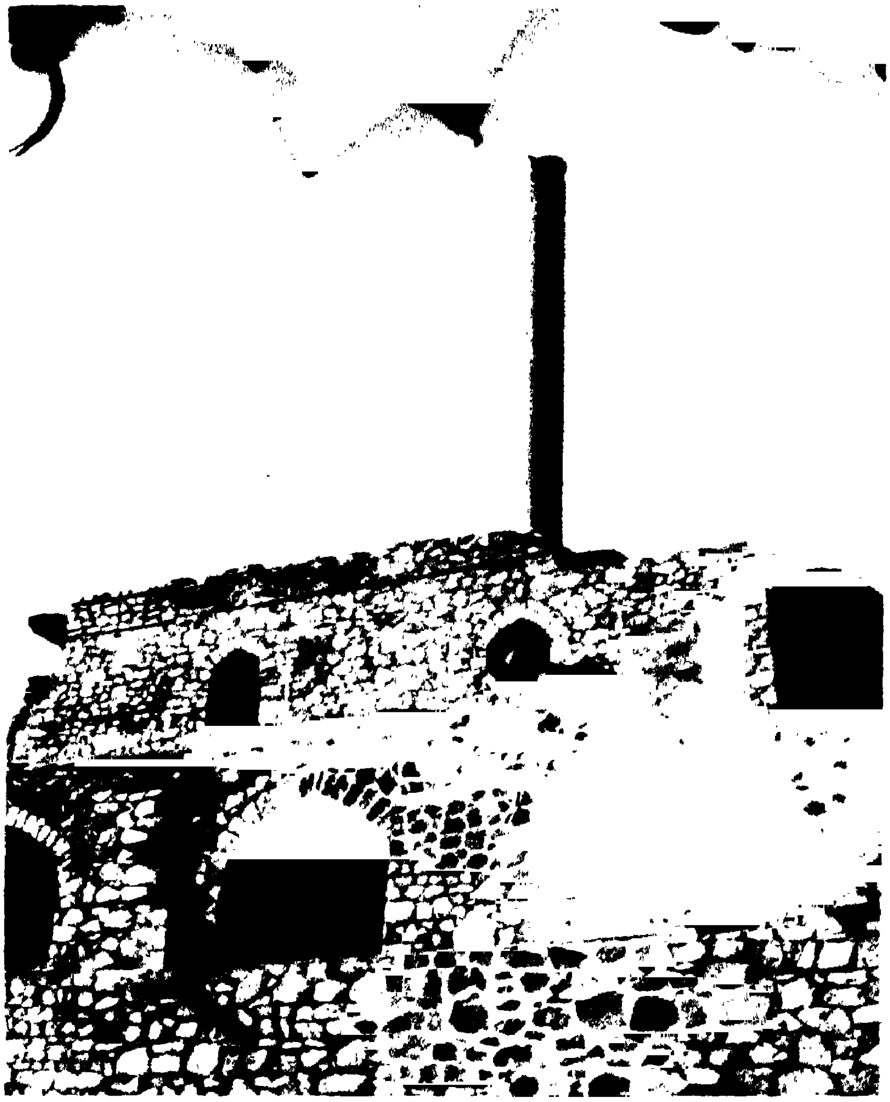

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The local people also seek to associate it with the legendary Pandavas and claim that there was a 'tapobhumi' here where the sages, in good old times, observed penances. Some credence to this may be lent, by the natural setting, bestowed with water reserves and springs in the rocky crevices, which were obviously held sacred.

The Tosham hill is a huge mass of black rocks, rising abruptly, to a height of over 250 metres, amidst the golden spread of sandy waste. On the top, there is an irregular plateau, covered with jungle growth. There are platforms and ponds, caves and caverns, some of which perenially contain a quantity of water. These water ponds mostly lie along the eastern brow of the rock, and bear names like Pandutirtha, Surya Kund, Vyasa or Guasa Kund, Kukara Sarovarna etc. Each of these is regarded 'equal in virtue to three places of pilgrimage elsewhere'.

Antiquarian Remains in Tosham

Rock Inscriptions:

The inscriptions found engraved on the precipice of the hill are the oldest and surest relics of old in Tosham. These were first discovered by Mr. Bird and were brought to notice by General Cunningham in 1875. Now, they may be seen about half way up the hill, on two separate large blocks. Of these, the larger one, nearly two and a half metres high and two metres broad, contains three records, including the longest and most important one, and the other contains two small epigraphs.

The first set of epigraphs reads: **जितं भगवता भगवत्पाददेशे** 'Victory has been achieved by the Divine One, in (this) region belonging to the feet of the Divine One'.

The second dated on paleographic grounds to the same age (to the fourth-fifth century A.D.), is a Vaishnava inscription,* which records the making, by an Acharya named Somatrata, of two reservoirs and a temple, for the use of the God Vishnu. Somatrata details his lineage from Yasatrata, who is referred to as a successor of many men (of preceding generations), a highly esteemed Satvata (perhaps of Satvata sect of the Vaishnavas), and a teacher of Yoga philosophy. The names of his grandfather, and father are Vishnutrata and Vasudatta, respectively.

Previously, it has been deciphered wrongly by General Cunningham and accordingly translated by Pratap Chandra Ghose. The former's view that it records the defeat of a prince Chatotkacha at the hands of Vishnu, a Tushara King, is based on a misleading reading and translation.

The third one simply records twice the word आचार्य. Below the longer record, there is engraved on the rock, an emblem which is a spoked wheel, resting on a pillar—most probably symbolising the Vishnu Chakra—the 'Chakratambha'. It has perhaps nothing to do with the Buddhist 'dharmachakra', or sun-symbol, as contended or presumed by previous writers.

Among other two short epigraphs, only one reads **जितं भगवता**- and the second reads **गौतमसगोत्रेण रावण्या(:) पुत्रेण आचार्य अचलभट्टेणत्रेण**. It is important to note that Somatrata, the builder of Vishnu temple and ponds, was also born of Ravani and belonged to the Gautama grotra. This makes him a brother of the teacher, Achalabhatta, of another epigraph, already mentioned above.

These epigraphs, though short, throw light on the contemporary religious history of this part of Haryana.

Archaeologically, the other significant things of the age are the large bricks which may still be seen in the vicinity and in the construction of the fort wall or on the hill.

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* १. जितमभीक्ष्णमेव जाम्बवतीवदनारविन्दोर्ज्जितालिना ।
२. दानवाङ्गनामुखाम्भोजलक्ष्मी तुषारेण विष्णुना ।
३. अनेकपुरुषाभ्यागतार्य्यसात्वतयोगाचार्य्य-
४. भगवद्भक्तयशस्त्रातप्रपौत्रस्याचार्य्य विष्णुत्रातपौत्रस्याचार्य्य-
५. वसुदत्तपुत्रस्य रावण्यामुत्पन्नस्य गोतमसगोत्रस्याचार्य्योपाध्याय-
६. यशस्त्रातानुजस्याचार्य्य सोमत्रातस्येदं भगवत्पादोपयो-
७. -ज्यं कुण्डमुपर्य्यावस्थः कु-
८. -ण्डं चापरं ।

Early Medieval

1. Thanesar

The Thanesar mound is the bare reminder of the Capital city of King Harsha, who later built the vast north Indian Empire with his Capital at Kanauj. The court poet Bana has given a charming description of Thanesar in his narrative: *Harsacarita*

> "Amid nature's lush beauty was this city made by man's hands with elaborate palaces, gardens and roads fortified and impregnable. The capital of the great race of kings from whom Harsha was descended".

5

5 *Distant view of Thanesar mound.*

2. Kalayat (Jind)

Situated on the Kaithal-Narwana Road, Kalayat, a holy spot, is traditionally associated with the saint Kapila. The present name of the site may attest to this legend.

Today, there is a big tank with strings of temples and ghats on its northern and eastern banks. It is said that some King Shalivahana built five temples here, two of which are still extant, and, of the remaining three, there are some remains.

The two brick temples are the only surviving and spectacular examples of architecture of the pre-Muslim period in this part of India. One of them, which is fairly preserved shows excellent carved brickwork. Another temple also partially retains the pristine carvings. The third temple which has been transformed beyond cognizance is represented only by an intricately embellished lithic doorway having multiple frames.

Architecturally and sculpturally, these temples and temple door frames may be placed around the turn of the eighth century.

There are two fine sculptures of Ganesha and Mahishamardini in black basalt, which are placed in worship in the temple of Bhagwati. Their delicate lines, masterly execution and iconographical clarity evidence to the attainment of high skill in sculptural craft in the region.

3. Pinjaur

From time immemorial, the inviting hills and valleys of the Shiwaliks have allured men.

Early man roamed on the river terraces in search of food, water and shelter, in the dense forests.

The primitive agriculturists found here fertile fields, pastures and rich woodlands.

The sages of a more conscious civilisation looked for peace and abundant fruit to subsist on during their austerities in search of truth. Thus, deeply imbedded in the past, this submontane area of Haryana, like the rest of India in general, has surviving vestiges of over a million years.

The same is true of Pinjaur.

The Dharamandala is a holy spot where important local fairs are held.

Many tanks and temples and springs, apart from many prospective sites, of the medieval period contain buried features, which await the archaeologist's spade.

4. Rohtak

Mound of Khokrakot

This mound is referred to in the *Mahabbarata*, the *Puranas* and in other literature as 'Rohitaki'. The town of Rohtak is often associated with the formidable Yaudheyas. Karttikeya, warlord of the gods, was its presiding deity. The extensive uprise covers an area measuring 3 km. long and 1½ km. wide, with its remains scattered over 8 km. towards east and 4 km. towards west. Trial diggings and chance discoveries have revealed remains of houses, Jain and Brahmanical images, a large number of coins and coin-moulds of Yaudheyas and Kushanas. Faint signs of defences around the Khokrakot mound are unmistakable.

Asthal-Abohar: which lies some 8 km. towards the east, seems to have once formed a part of Rohtak city This place has also yielded a few sculptures of the Pratihara style (eighth-ninth centuries A.D.) of which the titanic sculpture of Balarama, the images of Parshavanatha, the Jains Tirthankaras, Jain Lakshmi Siva-Parvati or Nandi, and Ganesh, are important. These are kept in the Math which itself is a complex of samadhi mandirs of past centuries, bearing on the history of architecture, art and sectarian faith.

Among the sculptures, the Jain images stand out for their simplicity. The icons of Balarama and Ganesha are massive, resilient and stately. The idols of Siva-Parvati and Chakreshvari, or Lakshmi, show delicate curves and exquisitely carved details. They are all carved out of buff sandstone, with a mastery of the chisel, which shows the existence here of a continuous tradition of temple sculpture.

The monastic establishment, where they are kept, are of the Nath order of the Sanyasins. It is said to have been established by Guru Chauranginatha, alias Puran Bhagat, in the eighth century A.D. destroyed by the Muslims around the twelfth century and later revived, in the first half of the eighteenth century by Mastnath who died in 1807 A.D.

5. Remains of Fortifications of Tosham

There are distinct traces of ancient defences from the foot to the summit of the hillocks. According to the Settlement Report of the Hissar District, Raja Amar Singh of Patiala (1765-81), got this fort built. But, if this be so, the Raja could have done little more than restore, or add to, the already existing fortress on the site. The general entrance might have been from the west, where a rampart, built of large and partially dressed stones, is visible. This was probably one of the outposts, for nothing survives further upwards till the outer fort wall is reached.

(*Continued on Page 15*)

the outer facade on the
e. Intricate floral design
rm pattern in baked brick,
terracotta plaques of Bhi-
desh of the 4th-5th century

k built ancient temple
form suggests that this
ed the Bhitargaon temple
eacock, in nervous lines,
drawing shows extraordi-

8

10

9

11

10 Kalayat: Mahisha Mardini in black granite, 9th century A.D. Carved by a sensitive chisel with remarkable careful detail. The face of the lion is mobile against the dynamic foreleg of the Goddess. The sword is deliberately static to signify power. The sculpture is reminiscent of the Himalayan style as evident in Bajaura.

11 Pehowa: River goddess with attendants on a door frame, now fixed on the Saraswati temple. Originally found at the nearby mound of the Vishwamitra-ka-Tila. (8th-9th century A.D.) The carving in sandstone is of a routine ritualistic character.

12 Pehowa: Mithuna couple on the door frame 9th century A.D. An awkwardly carved couple, showing extraneous influence. Apparently a ritual image of some Naga cult

12

9 Kalayat: This Ganesha also 9th century A.D. is a fine carving radiating grace from the elephant head. The double moon of the belly is an ingenious device to express resilience rather than smug fatness.

(*Continued from Page 12*)

The ruins now render the approach difficult. In the debris, have been found large bricks, measuring 31 x 22 x 5 cm. belong to the Kusana-Gupta age. It is, however, difficult, at present, to determine, finally, whether these are co-level with the beginnings of the defences, or were made use of at a later date, by removing them from older buildings. However, both, tradition and geography show that the site lay close to the old grand road between the west and Delhi. Political uncertainty and frequent Muslim invasions during the eleventh-twelfth centuries, kept the Tomaras and the Chauhanas on guard. New forts were constructed and old ones repaired. Tosham has special strategic importance, as the prestigious fort of Hansi was situated only 45 kilometres northwards.

Inside the fort, there is one large excavated pond, apart from constructed platforms and other building remains.

13

14

13 *Pinjaur: Dancing Ganesha, 10th century A D., has been approximately given an elongated torso with stumpy legs and a long curved snozzle to evoke a mood of inebriation. It is remarkable how the Indian carver could evoke a timeless mood of joy beyond versimilitude in his super human pantheon.*

14 *Pinjaur. Mithuna couples from door frame, now placed in the Raj Bhavan, Haryana Delicately chiselled doorway in the early medieval style, expressive of the various concrete expressions formalised in graceful poses, rather weather beaten and indistinct.*

The Samadhi of Mungipa at Tosham

Climbing up from the east, through a flight of steps, one reaches the Samadhi of Siddha Mungipa of the Natha Sect, who is believed to have immolated himself alive at that place. as appeasement for the guilt of killing a cow. It is said that the saint was in meditation when a cow came there. He just raised his hand to ward her off. Out of fear, the cow tried to run away but rolled down the hill and died.

People come here from far and wide to offer grains and oil at the Samadhi, over which there stands a domed structure of recent date.

A little above is a water pool, in a cavern, beside which there is a Shiva temple.

6. Suraj Kund

Contained within a huge amphitheatrical construction, in a wooded rock terrain of the Vindhyan outspur, the opaque blue sheet of water of the Suraj Kund, escaped, for six long centuries, the rapacity of intruders.

7. The Sun Image

There has been found a marvellous idol of Surya, wrongly worshipped as Vishnu, which is today installed in a modern temple in the bazar.

The one and a half metre high sculpture depicts the solar deity in standing posture, bearing a tall elaborate Kirita on the head and wearing long Mongolian boots on the feet as the Sun image in Konarak, Orissa. There are carved nine planets in anthropomorphic forms above the head of the diety. Down below, between the feet, there is a miniature figure of Usha or Savitri, the divine consort of the god. Two female figures, one each on either side, shooting arrows, symbolise the solar rays dispelling darkness. The God-in-worship is waited upon by two horse-headed human figures and a Pingala and Skanda. Pingala holds a book bearing a short epigraph reading Sri-Aditya pratima in the Nagari characters of the eleventh-twelfth century

Delicate and intimate modelling by one of the finest carver of high talent with a subtly skilful chisel, makes this a rare-image-icon.

8. Hansi

Hansi was once a formidable fort town on the Imperial road from Delhi to Lahore and Multan. Like many ancient ruins of Haryana, its antiquity is shrouded in mystery. But it is certain that its ancient name, on the eve of the Muslim conquest of India, towards the close of the twelfth century, was 'Asika,' as is recorded in the Hansi and Bijolia inscriptions of Prithviraj III of the Chahamuna house, dated to 1164 and 1168 A.D respectively. The local people still call it Ansi, not Hansi, as the Muslim chroniclers mis-spelt it. According to one tradition, it was founded by Anang Pal Tomara.

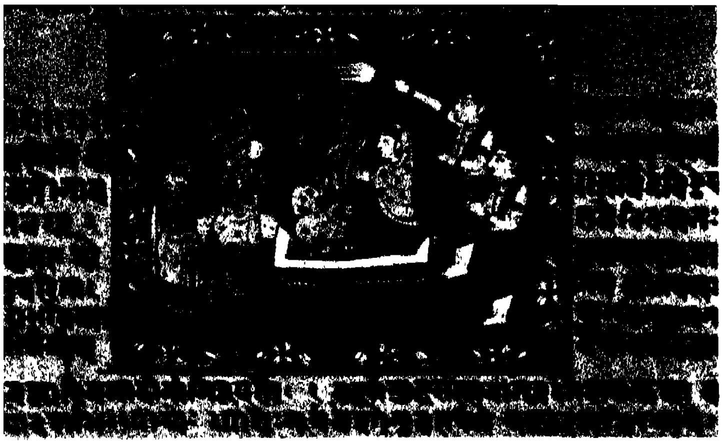
In 1037 A.D. Masud, the son of the conqueror Mahmud of Ghazni, took it by storm and looted it.

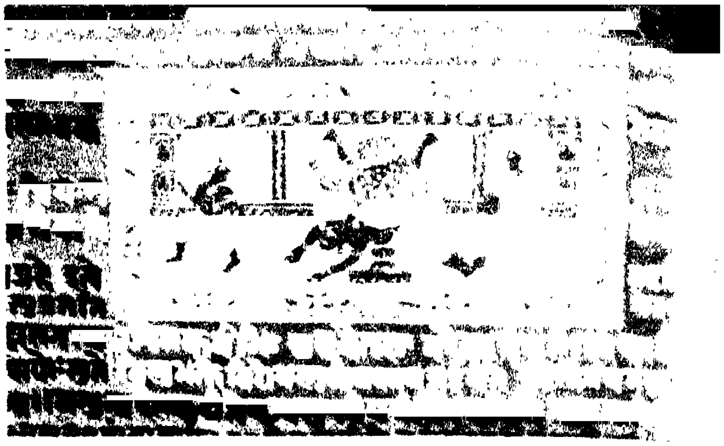
But it was soon recaptured by the Tomaras of Delhi, from whom Bisaladeva Chahamana finally annexed it to his kingdom, in about 1156 A.D.

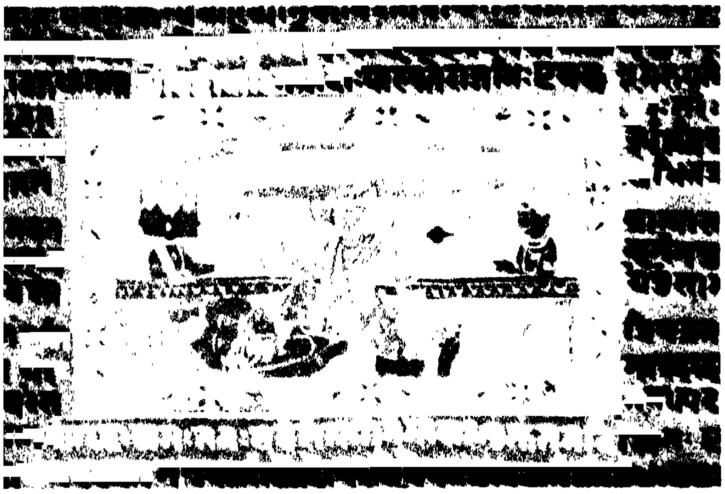
As is evident from the epigraphic references made in the foregoing paragraph, Prithvi Raj III appointed his maternal uncle, Kalhana, to safeguard the northern frontiers of his empire against the Muslim onslaughts, with his centre in Hansi. Kalhana expanded the Rajput sway upto Panchpura (Pinjaur).

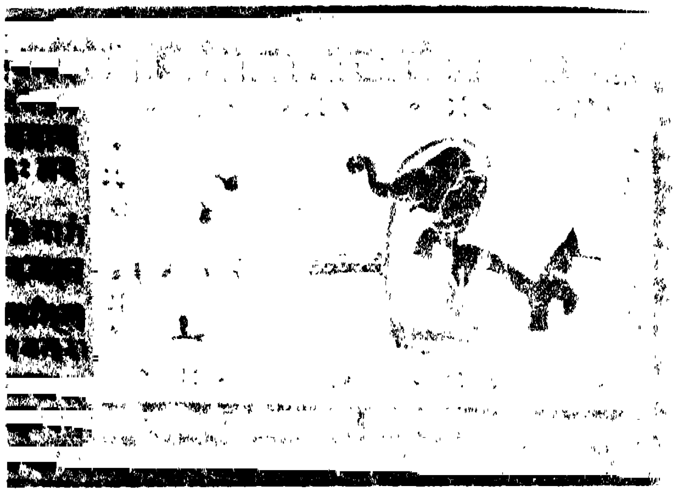
15 *Asthal Bohar (Rohtak) One of the most superb carvings in sandstone, extant in Haryana, probably of the early medieval period. The style is reminiscent of the early Khajuraho chisel of the 10th-11th century The loving embrace of Shiva-Parvati shows total grasp of the love embrace radiating inner union as the rays reflect the flame. Obviously, the Shiva Shakti Tatva as the manifestation of the power of love was well understood in the creative art of this area*

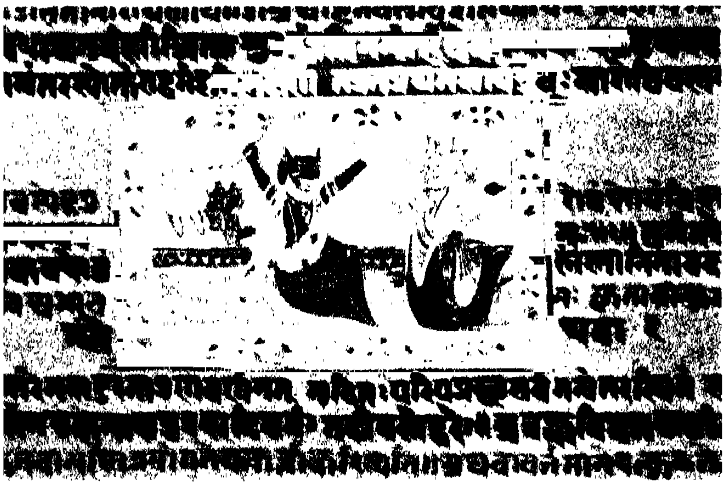
16 *Asthal Bohar (Rohtak): Vishnu seated in the lotus seat, reminiscent of the Buddha's pose, is a highly skilled carving radiating the grace of the supreme god There is a balance of objective subjective elements, with the essence of the benign presence as an over-all atmosphere. The sculptor recognises the quintessence of the meaning of godhood so that in this work which is similar to many others, one sees a spontaneous flow of grace different from such an evocation in the other images*

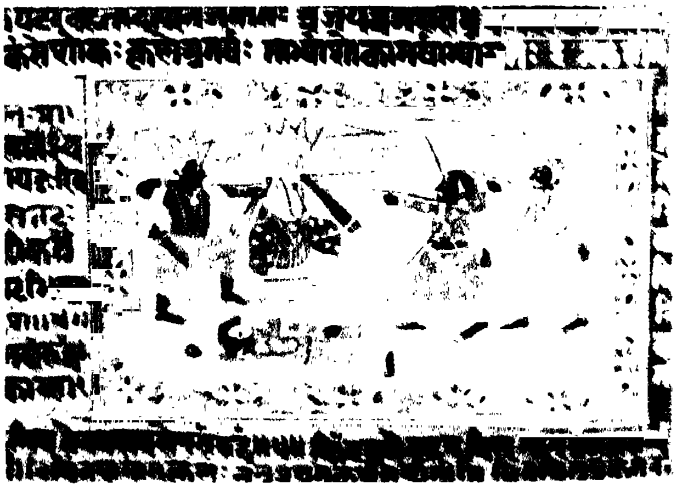


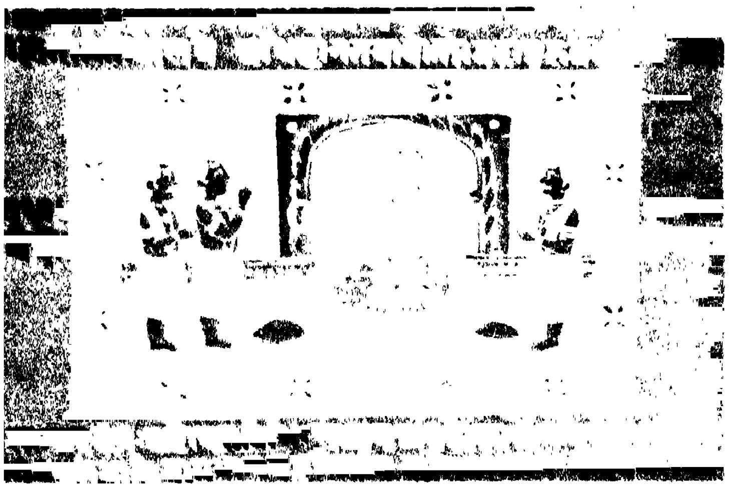


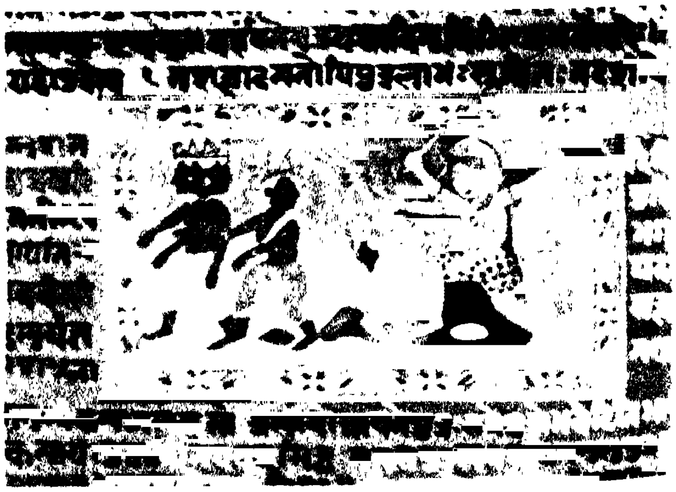


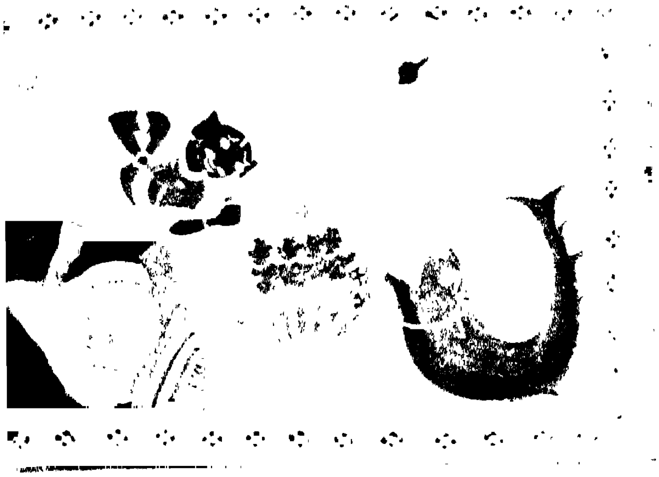


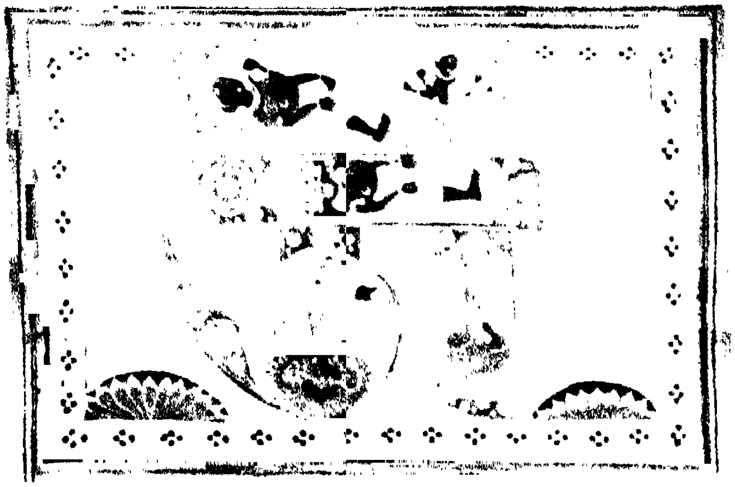


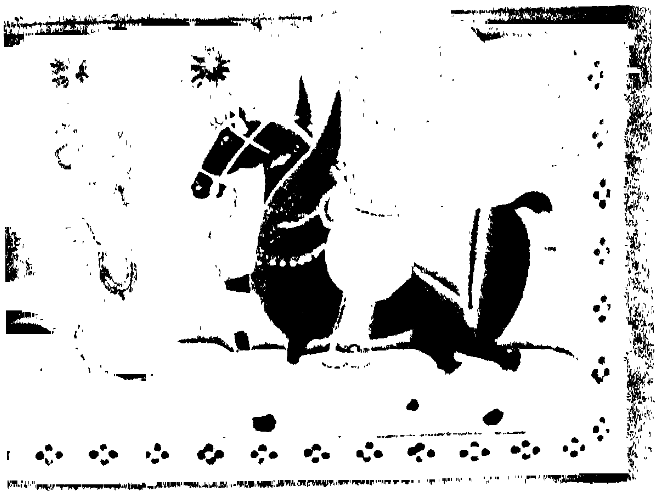


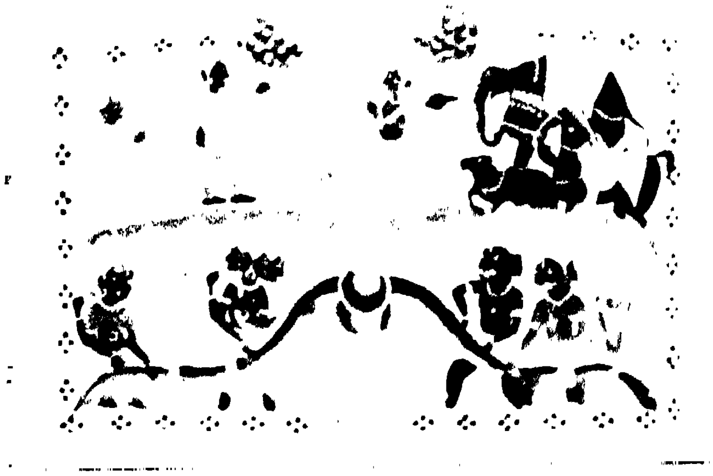












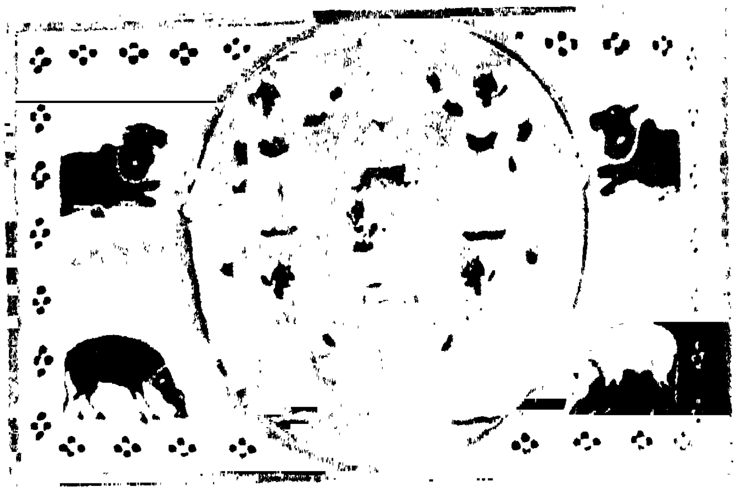
7(a) *Manuscript illustrations of the* Bhagavata-Purana, *Haryana, 19th century.*

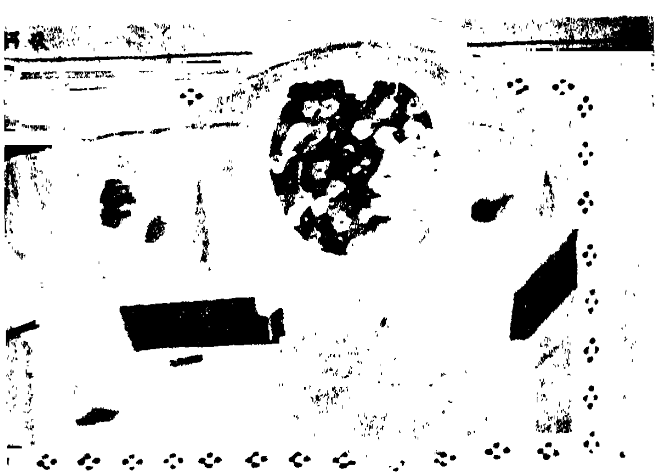
1. Rama *avatār* 2. Nrusimha *avatār* 3. Varaha *avatār* 4. Gajendra *moksha* 5. Sánkhāsura *vadha* 6. *Battle scene* 7 *Vishnu* 8. *Shiva in fury*

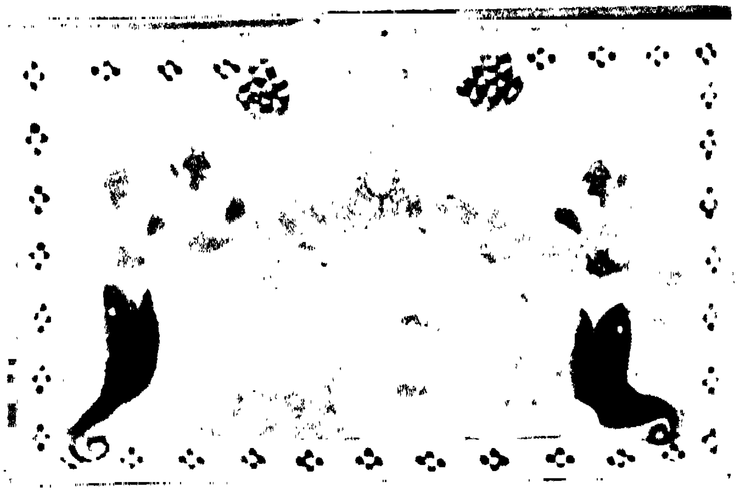
7(b) *Illustrations from the manuscript of* Bhagavata-Purana, *Haryana, 19th century.*

1 Sánkhāsura vadha 2. Omkār *idiograph* 3. Kalki avatār—*Incarnation of Vishnū* 4. Kūrma avatār—*Churning of the ocean* 5. Krishna avatār—*Krishna playing Rās* 6. Vishwarūpa darshan 7. Kaliyamardan Krishna

(*Courtesy:* Kurukshetra University Museum)







Medieval

1. Fatehabad (Hissar) 1352 A.D.

Fatehabad which lies 48 kms. north-west of Hissar, was founded in 1352 A.D. by Firuz Shah Tuglaq (1251-88) The new founded town was almost part of Firoz Shah's faith. It was named after his eldest son, Fateh Khan. It was while on a hunting excursion with his sons on his way back to Delhi from Thatta in Sindh, that the monarch thought of building a township on this site. The entire area for miles around was then densely wooded and used to be the Imperial hunting grounds, or Shikargah. Today, it bears a painfully treeless and desolate look. The Sultan had a canal dug to it from the river Ghaggar, to ensure water supply.

The fort has since become a ruin. The palaces have fallen. We can see some decaying defences. There is a tottering old mosque, tombs, a small Idgah, with a tower, stands in the centre of the courtyard, which happens to be the highest point of the township. The earth accumulation over the ground-level is about 20 metres thick. This suggests that the fort-town was built on an old site, whose antiquity remains an unsolved mystery, pending archaeological operations.

Some of the visible remains witness to the grand design of Firoz Shah.

2. The Prithviraj-ki-kachheri or Baradari: Tosham

There stands a small stony hillock to the north of the Tosham hill. It is crowned by a modest building, variously called Baradari or Prithvi-Raj-ki-Kachheri, made on a crosswise plan. Each wing is 5 metres high and projects over 3 metres from the central building, which is surmounted by a low dome.

Architecturally, it may fall in the early Sultanate period. The whole structure has sixteen arched openings although apparently there appear twelve openings, which probably lent it the name Baradari. It is made of rubble stones, joined and plastered over with lime mortar. A little below, half way down the hill on the north-east, there is a big stone platform which is very likely contemporary with the Baradari above

3. Mausoleum in Jhajjar

According to hearsay, the town of Jhajjar was founded 1300 years ago. However, it has never been a familiar name in history. Firoz Shah Tuglaq (1351-88 A.D.) is said to have dug a canal from Sutlej to this town.

The *Akbar Nama* and the *Ain-i-Akbari* record that Akbar (1556-1605 A.D.) stayed at Jhajjar, when his regent Bairam Khan despatched the royal insignia and presents for the Emperor. It seems that during Akbar's time it earned some prestige, evidenced by a group of tombs on the Bahadurgarh road.

Suraj Mal, the Jat Chieftain of Bharatpur (1756-63 A.D.), snatched it away from the Nawabs of Farrukhnagar Afterwards, it fell into the hands of Walter Reinhardt, the husband of Sumru Begum.

Nawab Nijabat Khan was awarded the principality of Jhajjar by the East India Company, in recognition of his services during the war of 1803 A.D. against Jaswant Rao Holkar.

The estate was confiscated in 1857 A.D. from Abdur Rahman Khan, whose role during the Freedom Movement was suspect in the eyes of the British.

For a short time it housed the headquarters of a district of the same name, but the office was abolished in 1860 A.D.

Now, Jhajjar is a tehsil in Rohtak district.

A group of Tombs

There is a group of sepulchral monuments to the east of the town on the Delhi road. All are constructed in the Pathan style with little variation.

The first from the east is the most imposing on account of its high platform, approached by a flight of steps. The main tomb is unusual, an oblong structure crowned by a dome. An epigraph records that it was constructed by Kalal Khan in Hijri 1009, i.e. 1600 A.D.

The second tomb is a fine structure, on an octagonal plan, upon a two-metre high terrace. In the foreground there is a beautiful cupola supported on grey pillars.

The third monument, which is approached through a gate on the south, carries the mortal remains of Abdul Samad. It is said to have been constructed during the time of Khalifa Nur-ud-Din. In the foreground, there is a canopied structure on sandstone columns.

The fourth structure to the south of the above, is a tomb of Nur Hassan, which was constructed in 1596-97 A.D.

There are other two tombs bearing inscriptions. Besides, there are scattered a large number of graves and platforms containing remains of nameless persons.

Architecturally, the tombs fall in the group of the Pathan mausolea, and cannot be far removed from each other in date, as the whole planning, design and decoration are similar. All these are mainly built on kankar stones. The monotony of the facades is relieved by the use of bold outlines. The near hemispherical and proportionate domes over heavy necks makes them interesting survivors of the Pathan style into the Mughal period. The whole impact is of modesty and rhythmic elegance. Thus they stand out as a class of their own. These structures are silhouetted against the lightly wooded, serene environment of an open countryside, far from the crowded town, which enhances the gravity of purpose of the monuments for which they were meant. The verse engraved on all the walls of the first tomb purports to say that: '*all man's worldly desires and hopes lead him nowhere but to the dust.*'

This is an appropriate epitaph on the age of the marauders, freebooters and soldiers of the feudal period.

4. The Lat of Firoz Shah at Fatehabad

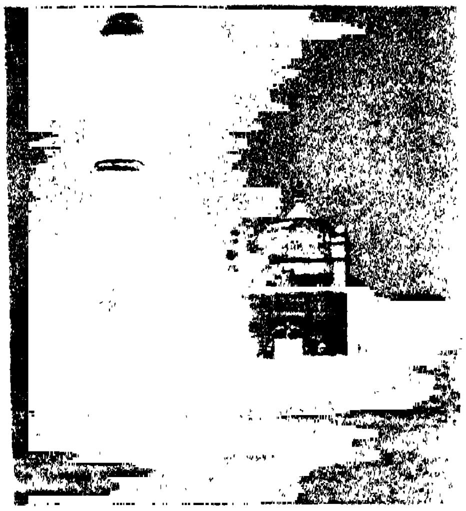
This is a stone pillar, measuring slightly less than 5 metres in height and 1.90 m. in circumference at the base. It stands in the centre of the Idgah, which, in its present state, is of a much later date. About three-and-half metres length of the pillar above the ground, is a monolithic block of yellowish buff stone which has close resemblance to a similar portion of the pillar, now standing in front of a mosque at Hissar. It is more than likely that both these once made a single monolithic pillar, which might have been erected by the Mauryan Emperor, Asoka, who caused pillars to be set up all over his empire, bearing his royal or religious decrees. Its original place might have been Agroha or Hansi, both of which claim hoary antiquity, Agroha which lies half way between Fatehabad and Hissar, and which has yielded valuable antiquities of the early historical and medieval periods, may have been the original home of this pillar. Firoz Shah Tuglaq had a craze for taking away such columns and transplanting them among his favourite complexes.

(One such Mauryan pillar was uprooted from the village of Topra near Jagadhari and taken to Delhi: this now crowns the multi-storied monument of the Sultan in the Kotla Firoz Shah).

The Asokan epigraph, that was once engraved on the pillar in Fatehabad has been systematically chiselled off for writing the Tuglaq inscription, which records the genealogy of Firoz Shah, in beautiful Tughra—Arabic characters carved in high relief.

The one and half metre high upper part of the pillar is made of the red sandstone pieces, with partial use of marble. The addition betrays poor taste.

(*Continued on Page 28*)



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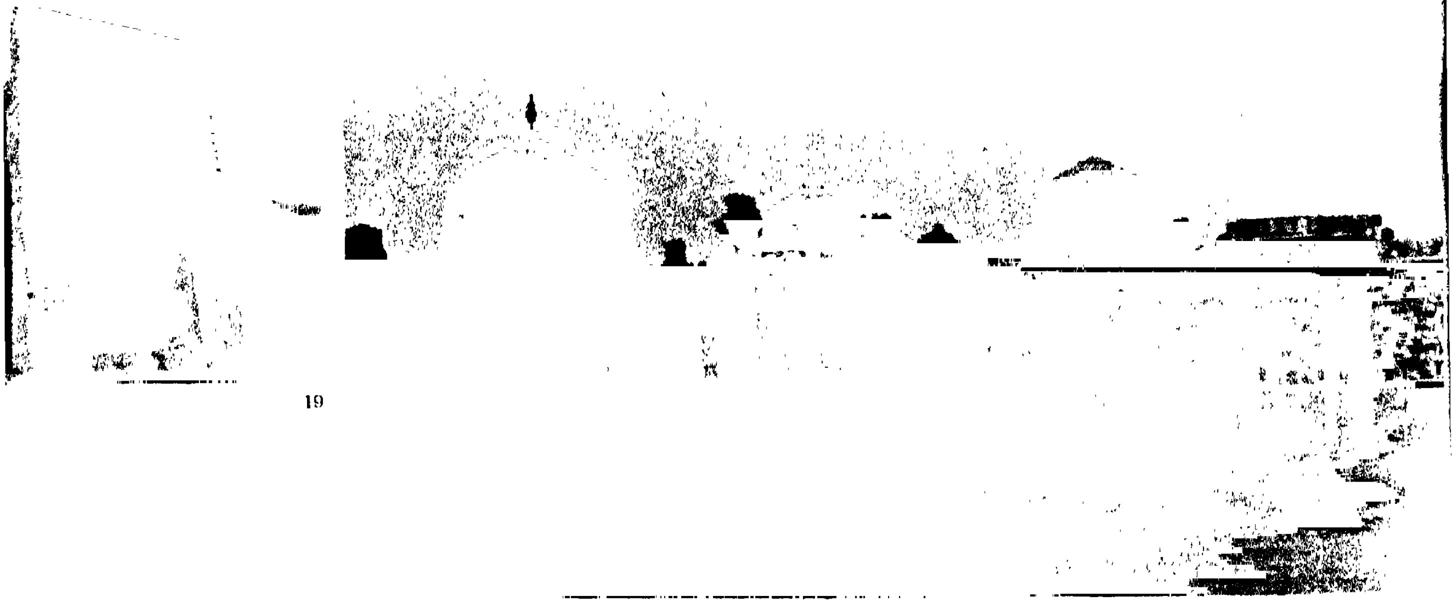
18 *Fatehabad: Full view of the Firuzan column. Firuz Shah Tughlaq seems to have been impressed by Asokan pillars. This column, ordered by him at Fatehabad, is obviously to mark a victory*

19 *Hansi: Entrance to the inner Fort.*

20 *Jhajjar (Rohtak): A group of tombs in the pre-Mughal Pathan style. The central one in the left row is the tomb of Abdul Samad. The monument at the right is the tomb of Nur Hasan built in 1596-1597 A. D. Simple, rugged and monumental, with great care in the making of the domes.*

21 *Hansi: Tombs of James Skinner and his Begum.*

22 *Hissar: Lat-ki-Masjid complex of Firuz Shah Tughlaq. Among the many buildings built by Firuz Shah, th Kotla, the Haus Khas Tomb and Lat-ki-Masjid, stand out as ambitious architecture, where he incor porated the basic elements of Tughlaqabad in th context of his own ambitions. The slightly slantin walls were absorbed from the Seljuk style. The jal are assimilated from the Hindus. The column i adapted from the Asokan pillars. Space is, however occupied for the function of the Muslim prayer*



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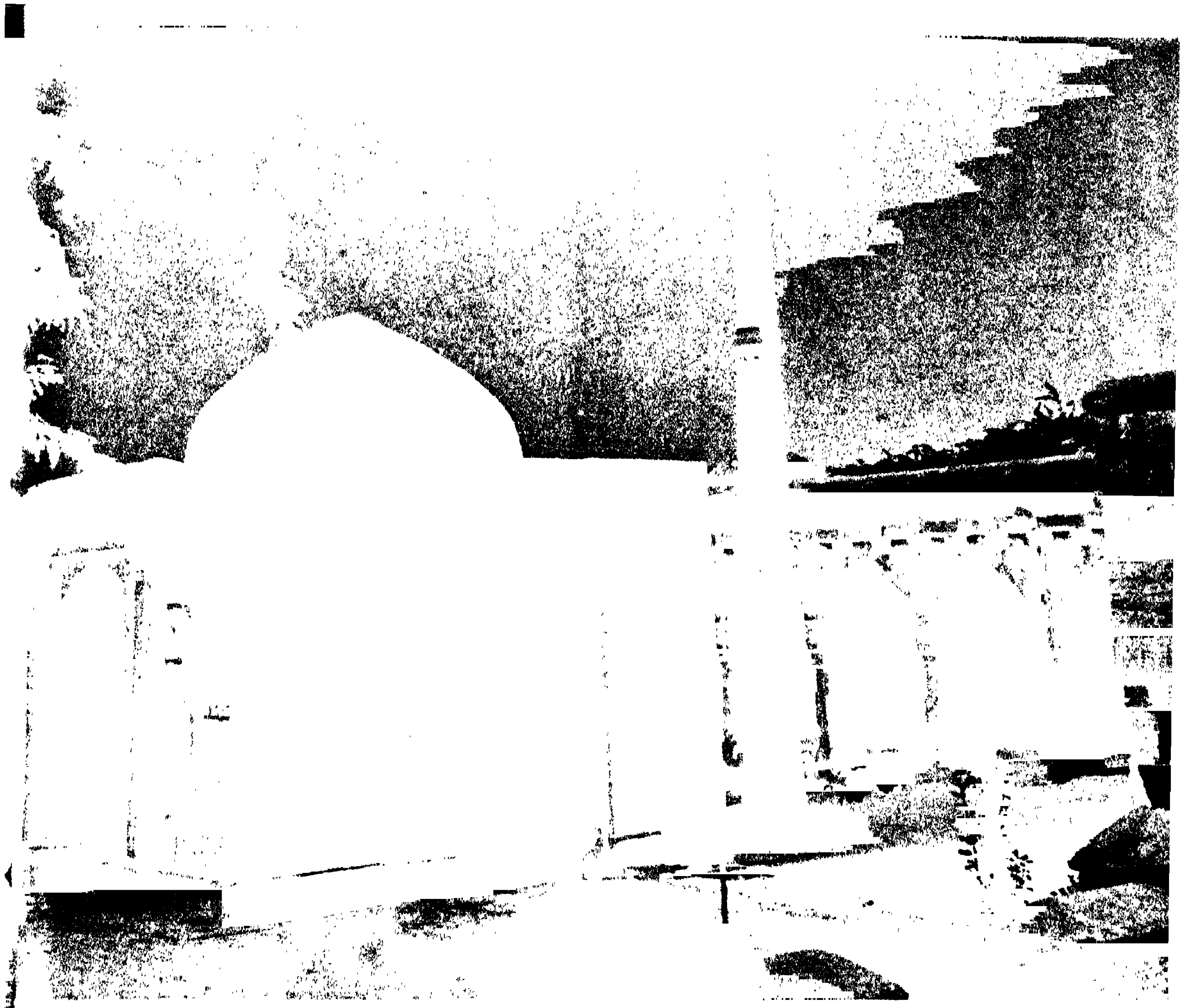
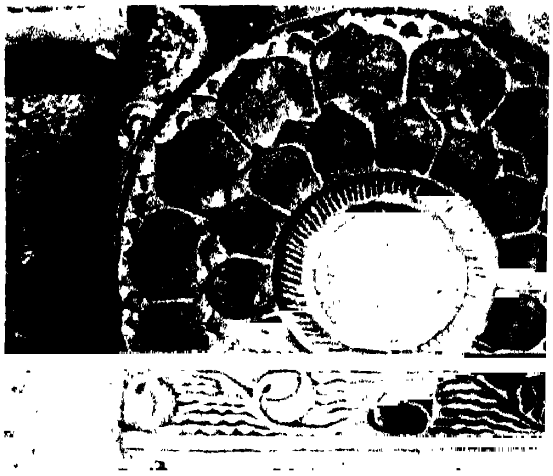




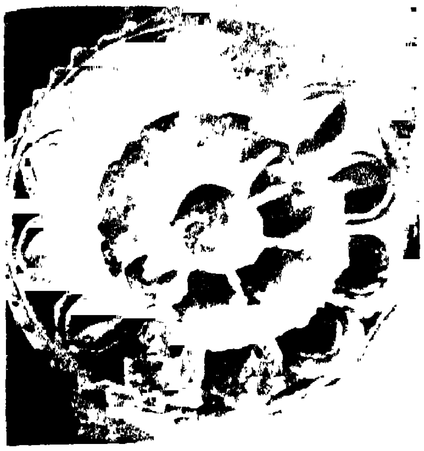
23 Hissar. Carved Hindu pillar in the Gujri Mahal 14th century A.D.

24 Lotus medallion from the Gujri Mahal pillar attempts ambivalent symbolism of sun and its rays

25 *Narnaul: View of Jal Mahal (1591 A.D.) One of the finest buildings in the synthetic Hindu-Muslim Akbaride style, built by Shah Quli Khan, a Governor of the Imperial court on this important outpost of the Empire*

26 *Narnaul: Painted ceiling in Jal Mahal shows love of colour obviously adopted from the Amber Palace of Raja Bihari Mal whose daughter Akbar had taken in marriage.*

26



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27 Narnaul: Tomb of Ibrahim Khan Sur, 16th century A D, erected by his grandson, Sher Shah Sur. Already the Sur Pathan dynasty had extended their ambitions beyond the resilient unornamented rather rugged Lodi Mausoleums in Delhi. Sher Shah's own tomb at Sasaram in Bihar is a truly grand structure. The Mausoleum he had built for his ancestor, Ibrahim Khan, borrows from Rajasthan, before Akbar, the devices of embroidered wall surfaces, decorative doorways and kiosks on the side of the main dome

28, 29 Details showing decoration of the doorway.

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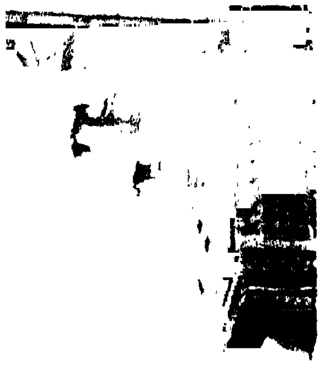

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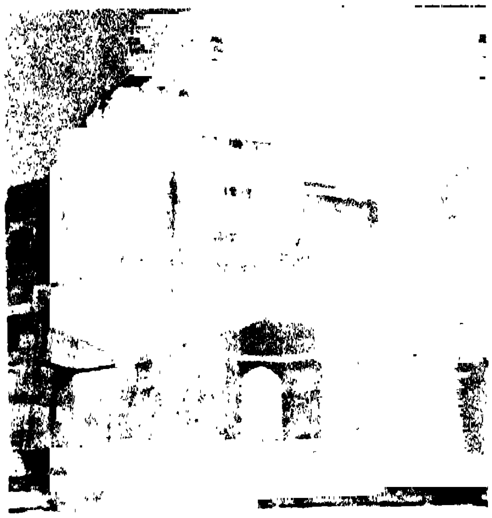

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30 Narnaul. Tomb of Shah Quli Khan improves on the earlier Pathan Lodi tombs by absorbing the blandishments cultivated by Akbar in the treatment of walls from the Hindus The way the walls are sunk on all sides to give depth, and the facade scooped out in imitation windows to release the power of stone and to formalise decoration was already present in the later Pathan tombs nearby The miniature effect of the Mausoleum gives it a lyrical beauty

(Continued from Page 23)

Humayun's Mosque, Fatehabad

Locally called Muhammad Humayun ki Masjid, it is a small and unassuming, but exquisitely proportioned and enamel decorated little mosque, evidently the oldest one here. Legend has it that the Mughal Emperor, on his flight to Amarkot, after his fateful defeat at the hands of Sher Shah Suri, happened to pass through Fatehabad on Friday. On hearing the Muezzin's call to prayer, he made a stop-over, in order to offer his prayer in this mosque, which has since borne his name. Humayun's inscription was originally found here and later studded into the screen-wall of the Idgah. One record, still found ***in situ***, in the building, mentions its repairs by one Nur Rehmat in the Hijri 1309 that is to say, in the early eighties of the last century. Today, it is in a pitiable condition. The walls are in danger of falling down. The hamam and the floors are in bad shape. Munshis and lawyers have put up their chowkis in front, thus creating a montage of the old decay with the new English style vulgarities.

Associated Structures

The enclosing walls of the Idgah contain two other epigraphs. One of them set in the screen wall of deep yellow limestone, belongs to Humayun. Another is built into the northern wall and may be seen from the outside.

There are also some old ruins of buildings, two unfinished tombs, and another, a tomb of a saint who is popularly called Mir Shah or Shah Baba Khan. Today, even the Hindus come here to pay offerings.

There are some other mosques in the town. These are of a later date, probably the nineteenth century.

A few old residential buildings have beautifully carved wooden door jambs and balconies, bearing intricate decorations of mythological scenes.

The vast fallow land, which lies to the east and the north of this fort, must once have been a natural forest, now suitable for an animal sanctuary.

5. Hansi

Under the early Pathan rulers, Hansi became a strong strategic fort. The emergence of the new towns of Fatehabad and Hissar in the fifties of the fourteenth century A.D. however, relegated it into insignificance.

At the turn of the eighteenth century, of George Thomas, an Irish free-lancer, carved out a kingdom for himself. Later Hansi became the headquarters of a British mercenary, Colonel Skinner, who raised the famous cavalry, Skinner's Horse, in the mid nineteenth century.

Notwithstanding the eclipse of political power during the longer part of Muslim rule, Hansi continued to remain a centre of religion and learning. That aspect of its personality owes much of its association with the famous Sufi saint, Baba Sheikh Farid, who spent twelve years in a little den here. The four Qutbs, the disciples of Baba Farid, kept their connection with the shrine. And the dargah still celebrates the annual Mela.

It is true, much of its past is lost to time, and much lies buried in the folds of the earth. From the viewpoint of location the surviving buildings can be grouped into two sections:

A—THE QILA GROUP

B—CHAHAR QUTBS GROUP

A—THE QILA GROUP

1. *Barsi Gate*

This is an important gate in the southern wall of the outer defences of the Hansi fort. A Persian epigraph, set up above the doorway, records the date of its construction, which corresponds to the year 1304-05 A.D.

thus it can be ascribed to the reign of Ala-ud-Din Khilji. When he ascended the throne in 1296 A.D. the whole north-west India was in a state of anarchy. The Mongol inroads had largely devastated the Punjab. He repaired and strengthened the forts in the north-west and put up there sufficient garrisons. This gate, of course, is a material proof of his interest in this strategic fort.

It is a fine example of fort architecture. Its protruding round bastions, big rectangular forms, bedecked with simple panellings, contrasted with encaustic tile-work in the spandrels, give the effect of both strength and beauty.

2. *The Gateway complex of the Citadel*

Standing on the roof-top of the Barsi gate, one can see, looking towards the north, at the foot of the imposing mound, another gateway complex in perfect alignment with the former. The latter is provided in the southern wall of the inner circumambulation, giving access to the citadel, which is now in ruins. The tottering walls of the defences, thrown round the mound, can still be seen at places in the periphery. There is a decaying structure, outside the wall, near the gateway. This was probably a stable-cum-garrison post. While going round the whole complex, one cannot fail to notice that the material of the old Hindu palaces and temples were freely made use of in its construction. There are two fine sculptured freizes, depicting a row of swans in different poses, now fixed, one each in the gateway complex and the other in the Baradari.

3. *Baradari*

After climbing up the steep ascent of the mound, one reaches a long pillared structure called Baradari near the eastern brow of the mound, held by a mountainous defensive wall. Originally, this might have been a pillared hall of early Muslim architecture, in which the building material of old Hindu monuments was freely used. One of the two aforesaid beautiful friezes, depicting the identical theme of swans in different natural poses, may also be seen built in there. All these might once have formed part of a continuous decorative scheme of a palace or a temple, in the fort.

Sometime during the later periods, perhaps during Colonel Skinner's rule, the fort was converted into a horse stable, which perhaps necessitated the partition walls inside in the pillared bays.

Sayyid Shah-ki-Khangah and the Associated Structures

At the northern end of the extensive mound, there is a group of structures, popularly known as Khangah, after a revered mausoleum of Wali Hazrat Sayyid Shah Nismat Ullah, who died here fighting during the campaign of Muhammad Ghori in 1191-92 A.D. He successfully led the Muslim forces to conquer the fort, though he lost his life fighting on that spot. In course of time, it became a sacred place for the Hindus as well. A fair is held every March, at which much charity is dispensed. There are inscriptions in Arabic engraved on slabs or incised in plaster. It is clear from these epigraphs, as well as the architecture, that it underwent successive changes in the past. Today, it is a small complex of monuments bearing a deserted look. The domes and roof have collapsed. An explorer, who visited the tombs nine decades ago, gives vivid details of how devoutly a contingent of Mullahs used to clear precincts constantly dusting the main tomb and fanning it with peacock feathers.

There are two mosques alongside this tomb inside an enclosure collectively called Rauzah.

The bigger mosque may be medieval, while the smaller one measuring 33' x 15.6', seems to be of a comparatively later date. Carved pillars and architectural members of Hindu origins are used in construction.

To the west of this Rauzah there are some beautifully carved stone pillars and lintels now used in a deserted well, which is almost hidden from view by thick jungle.

The Water Tank

Near the centre of the mound, there is a large closed tank to store rain water. It is difficult to say precisely when it was dug.

B—CHAHAR QUTBS GROUP

The second group of Medieval Monuments are located to the west of the town, and represent one of the important centres of the Chistia order of Sufism in Haryana—the others being at Panipat, Thanesar and Narnaul. The extant monuments here are:

1. *The Chahar Qutbs:* The tomb of the four Qutbs, coloquially called Chahar Qutbs, namely:—
   - i. Jamal-ud-Din Hansi (1187-1261)
   - ii. Burhan-ud-Din Munawar (1261-1300 A.D.)
   - iii. Qutb-ud-Din Munawar (1354 A.D.)
   - iv. Nur-ud-Din, Nur-i-Jahan, 'Mughalkush' (1325-1397 A.D.)

Jamal was the son of Hamid-ud-Din and grandson of Niamatuallah. On his father's death, he was given the administration of Hansi. But he preferred religious devotion. He became the disciple of Baba Sheikh Farid Ganj-i-Shakar of Pak Pattan.

The tomb, which houses the mortal remains of these Qutbs and some of their family members, is a domed structure of no particular architectural significance, although its historical and religious value is undeniable. The old monument seems to have been subjected to many overall changes. This tomb is joined to a small mosque on the west. It is said that it was here that Baba Farid used to meditate and offer prayers. Outside this mosque the local Mullah points to a seat having a flight of three steps, from where, he asserts, the saint delivered his sermons.

2. *The Tomb of Mir-Tajarah*

The most beautiful tomb in the complex is that of Mir-Tajarah, or Farmer-General or Chief Surveyor of Sultan Hamid-ud-Din. This Mir-Ali, or Alam, was a disciple of Jamal, and is said to have originally built this tomb for his teacher. But the latter is said to have remarked: 'Who knows for whom it is intended?' Incidentally, the former died earlier and was himself buried there.

It is a fine mausoleum, 11 metres square and 15 metres high, balanced and showing brilliant encaustic tile decoration. There is an exaggerated description of it that the 'glazed tile-work here surpasses in freshness and harmony of colouring, anything—not excepting the finest specimen at Multan and elsewhere.'

3. *The Mosque at Tughlaq*

The most imposing edifice is the larger mosque in the northern enclosure. It was originally constructed by Feroz Shah Tughlaq, although, according to legend, it was constructed out of the money offered by Muhammad Tughlaq, to the last Qutb. The thick coat of lime now hides the old stone walls.

4. *The Chhatri*

A square canopied tomb, locally called *Chhatri*, is a little monument over three metres across. Four carved sandstone pillars support the enamelled canopy, and the vault contains two graves, said to be the oldest in Hansi.

5. *Columnated Structure*

A little way away, ten ornamented red stone pillars carry four canopies giving shade over eight graves (now already largely demolished) of the descendants of Qutb Jamal.

6. *Tombs of James Skinner and his wife: Mid 19th century*

To the north-west of the tomb of Ali-Tajarah stand two beautiful small square tombs hiding the bodily remains of Colonel James Skinner and his wife, both of whom, according to the Maulwi, presently residing at the Chahar Qutb, embraced Islam.

James Skinner was a Britisher, who independently raised a mercenary cavalry. The British power made use of this force to subdue the growing power of George Thomas, who gave many nightmare to them, as well as to keep at bay a miscellany of local Sikh chiefs of Punjab and Haryana, in the first years of the nineteenth century. Later, his cavalry was absorbed into the regular British army, under the name of the Skinner's Horse, which continued thereafter. Skinner was amply rewarded a big jagir around Hansi, where some of his descendants still live in the magnificent company style house built by Skinner.

The tombs of the Skinners are small domed structures of square size. The cut-plaster decoration is tastefully executed and bespeaks of the continued craft traditions coming down from the Mughals.

6. Narnaul

There is a travelogue of 1607 A.D. written by one Latif, which describes Narnaul as 'the finest little township I have seen in northern India.' According to him, this place was then considered a health resort. He saw many palatial buildings, colleges, parks, lakes, mosques and mausoleums and in typical Persian Language hyperbole, he likened it to 'paradise'.

But there is very little known about the early history of Narnaul before the medieval period.

Of course, legend associates it with hoary past, when it was called Nandigrama.

Later, it seems to have been associated with the memory of a Rigveda Seer, named Chayavana, who had his hermitage under the shadow of the Dhosi Hill.

In 1137 A.D. a Muslim saint warrior, Hazrat Turkman, popularly known as Shah Wilayat, is known to have come to Narnaul "with jewels in one hand and sword in the other". He fought many battles with the native Rathor Rajputs and was killed fighting. A tomb, a mosque, later elaborated into a collegiate complex, still stands in his memory near the Mausoleum of Ibrahim Khan Sur, on the western side of the town.

Under the Lodi Kings (fifteenth century A.D.), Narnaul was the residency of a Commissioner. Ibrahim Khan, the grandfather of the illustrious Pathan Sher Shah Suri (who defeated Humayun), held this assignment.

Under Akbar, Narnaul was flourishing township. Nawab Shah Quli Khan was appointed Governor. And he had built many fine buildings and gardens.

Emperor made it a mint town, perhaps from the accessible minerals from Khetri in Rajasthan nearby. Coins were issued by Akbar and his successors from Narnaul.

The oppression of Aurangzeb aroused, the local Hindu population into indignation. And the Satnami tillers fought many actions against the tyrant's forces. The revolt was, however, crushed with brutal violence. This left a heritage of bitterness and the place remained disturbed under every Mughal Governor till the end of the dynasty.

The Marathas took advantage of the discontent and took over the township for sometime, though the Mughals reasserted their authority.

Ultimately, the British took it over and conferred it as an estate on the Raja of Patiala, as a reward for services rendered in suppressing the freedom struggle of 1857.

The successive occupations by the Officers of the court of Delhi, have left important constructions and other remnants of feudal culture.

One man rule ensured the use of the best landscapes for the nobles. But the small township, in which the retainers lived, is not lacking in charm, with its Havelis, decorated with coloured stones, cut-plaster designs and occasional wall paintings.

Monumental Remains

Mausoleum of Ibrahim Khan

Sher Shah Suri (1538-1546 A.D.) had his tomb built in honour of his able grandfather, Ibrahim Khan, who served as an officer of the Lodhis at Narnaul. The monument was constructed under the supervision of Sheikh Ahmed Niyazi. It is a perfect example of the square tomb of the Pathan style, characterised by its massive outlines, exquisite details, and pleasing interplay of colours. The creation of a high terrace, double storey simulation, bold arches, low domes, beautiful kiosks on carved pillars, slender turrets (guldastas), and elegant merlons, give it balance, strength and dexterity. The use of deep red, grey and white stone, encaustic tile-work, painted ceiling with excellent brush work, and subtle lapidary, give it a richness which is unique among such buildings in Haryana.

The Tomb, Garden and Tripolia of Shah Quli Khan

Shah Quli Khan was a trusted nobleman of Akbar. He was made Governor of the Punjab. It is said that the Emperor, out of goodwill towards him, admitted him to his female apartments, and he, in turn, out of respect for the zenana, got himself castrated. He died at Agra in 1675 A.D. At Narnaul, where he mostly lived, as the *Ain-i-Akbari* and the travelogue of Latif, tell us, he had erected splendid buildings, had large tanks dug and laid out beautiful gardens. Later, he had built for himself a fine mausoleum.

He laid out a beautiful garden and named it *Aram-i-Kauser*, of which today only the enclosure walls, a well, and the gateway complex, stand. Inside this garden, which is currently under cultivation, stands his tomb built in 1578 A.D. It is a small but a fine monument, constructed in bluish grey and red stones, on an octagonal plan, which was another variation of the tomb style of the Pathans.

The Tripolia Darwaza a (three transcept gate) was constructed in 1589 A.D. as main entrance to his garde by Shah Quli Khan.

Jal Mahal or Khan Sarowar

This pleasant building 'whose water and air are refreshing like paradise', was got constructed by Shah Qul Khan in 1591 A.D. This is stated in an epigraph set up here. Standing in the centre of a large tank, now drie up, and approached through a causeway, this 'pleasure house' is surmounted by five kiosks, the larger bein in the centre and the remaining at the corners.

The under-side of the recessed arched passage, enhances the beauty of the tank and gives it a fairy-lan charm.

Of the large garden, which was laid out around this baradari, exists no trace there now.

Jami Mosque

According to hearsay, it was constructed by Aurangzeb, on the site of an old temple of Chamandu, buil by some king Nunakarna. Actually, however, it was constructed in 1590 A.D. by Shah Quli Khan. It is moderate sized mosque, with three arched openings leading to triple bays, surmounted by correspondin domes on its roof. Recently, the local inhabitants have dug out a few carved pillars and brackets of Pratihara Tomara period from beneath the foreground of the Masjid.

Tomb of Islam Quli Khan

Islam Quli Khan was a commander of 'Four Thousand' under Akbar. *Ain-i-Akbari* gives an interestin account of him: that he kept 1200 women and was so suspicious that whenever he went to the Imperia court, he put his seal over the strings of their under-garments, and that out of annoyance the women at last poisoned him.

He lies in a tomb in the garden of Shah Quli Khan to the north of the mausoleum of the latter. It is a brick structure of no particular significance.

Chatta Rai Mukand Das

This spacious palace, built by Ray-i-Rayan Mukand Das, the Diwan of Narnaul, during the reign of Shah Jehan (1628-58 A.D.) is dexterously planned and embellished, though its exterior is unostentatious and drab. It is a five-storeyed structure, with several halls, rooms and pavilions. The bulk of it has fallen and the interior is filled with the debris, dirt and wild jungle growth. The entire planning and the remnants of the interior decoration show ambitious intentions. The extensive open terrace on the south, light elliptical pavilions on different levels, halls on pillars and running verandah around a central court, once adorned with a marble fountain, impart to it spaciousness and light. The profuse use of marble for veneering, and pillars and brackets, provided with artificial cataracts and drains, might have been cosy retreat during the tropical summers.

In the south-eastern corner on the terrace, there is a dilapidated well, from which the water was raised into reservoirs, at various levels, through the Persian wheel to supply all the storeys. An exquisite isolated gateway-complex, well provided with projecting balconies, and marble veneering, stands a few metres to the west of the palace. This is said to have been the main entrance to the complex. The intervening space is now being separated by jerry-built modern constructions.

Tomb of Shah Wilayat

The tomb of Shah Wilayat stands beside the mausoleum of Ibrahim Khan. It is a big tomb-cum-collegiate complex, which incorporates within it a long tradition of architecture ranging from the Tughlaq to the British period. Much of its originality is marred by later constructions. Originally, the tomb and the adjoining complex were constructed during the reign of Feroz Shah Tughlaq. The author of *Gulzar* says that the eastern colonnades and the dome were erected by Alam Khan Mewati in (A.H. 760, A.D. 1357), and part of the enclosure was also erected by him. The old portion has all the stern simplicity and grandeur of the Tughlaq style of architecture. The arches have the ogee curves after the fashion of the time. The tomb itself is surmounted by a hemispherical dome, crested by a finial of the Pathan style. The interior of the dome is a perfect square and has some paintings, which are of much later date. Its two enclosures were constructed towards the end of Mughal time. A part was even added in the British period.

The inscription in Persian verse over the doorway, registers the date of demise of the Turkish saint in a chronogram as well as in figures, i.e., A.H. 531.

Chor Gumbad

On account of its eminent location, isolated identity and haunting appearance, it can hardly escape the attention of a visitor to the town of Narnaul. It is, therefore, called the 'signboard of Narnaul.' One can have a view of it from miles away, and it looks like a haunted fairy palace of the old folk tales.

It is a big square monument with single chamber inside. It seems double-storeyed from the outside, as the second level is obtained by way of providing an open verandah running around. The wide low dome and ogee arches and some other feature of architecture, place it in point of time with the tomb of Shah Nizam and old parts of the adjoining madrassa built in 1357 A.D. in the Tughlaq Style.

The passage running in the thickness of the walls may baffle the visitor, with its twists and turns. It is therefore called 'Bhul-Bhullaiyan', a maze.

It was constructed by Jamal Khan, an Afghan, as his tomb. Though the date of the construction is not known, the pointed arches with the S-curve as well as other details of construction, put it co-eval with the tomb complex of Shah Wilayat. Today, there are no graves inside. It is said that for long it remained a hide-out for thieves and highwaymen and that may account for its present name Chor Gumbad.

Sarai Rai Mukand Das

At a small distance from the Chatta lies the Sarai Rai Mukand Das. The building bears an epigraph, which says that, during the reign of Shah Jehan, Rai-i-Rayan Mukand Das, a servant of Nawab Asif Khan, built the lofty building of caravanserai under the supervision of Mehta Purana Mal Hari Dass. At present it is the Deputy Commissioner's office and houses the ancillaries.

Besides these monuments, there are, in Narnaul, a number of tanks, containing open pavilions, chambers, washing ghats and ramps for the cattle to descend for water. Some of them belong to the later Mughal period.

7. Pinjaur Gardens—The Mughal Garden, Pinjaur

Looking across a fertile valley, ringed by hills, the romantic surroundings caught the eye of the noble of Aurangzeb (1658-1707), Fidai Khan, the Governor of Sirhind, who laid out the present garden, in the scale and concept of the stepped gardens of the Mughals.

Unlike most Mughal gardens, however, the entrance is from the higher ground. The seven terraces *descend* from the hill, revealing a fresh view at each level. They do not *ascend*, as in Shalimar and Nishat in Kashmir. The length of the garden is adorned with an arterial water channel, which is studded with fountains at intervel pools, basins, falls and slanting cascades. Other devices are employed among the parterres, so as to make the whole into an effective type of water-flow garden. At the end of central points of a terrace, a palace, a loggia, or a pavilion, was created. The Shish Mahal, and its surmounting pavilion is on the first level. The Rang Mahal with its spacious open hall is on the second. And the Jal Mahal is on the fifth.

As in other Mughal gardens, privacy is ensured by putting an embattled wall all round. Another fortification wall separates the upper two terraces from the rest to doubly ensure the security for the zenana.

Emphasis on the geometrical construction, distinguishes the landscaping here from the natural flow of the Hindu idea, which conceived so much garden as space wrested from the forest. The effects are obtained by means of parterres bordered by flowering and aromatic plants.

The mango orchard on each side of the lower terraces are high enough to enclose space. The short trees of the lower part of the garden are designed to let the eye roam beyond the dense groves.

The calm symmetry of the Mughal pavilions has suffered from extensions built in the last century.

Nevertheless, in design and effect, Fidai Khan's garden is a *tour de force*. And when there is sufficient water, rippling in the canals, or pools, or foaming through the falls, the effect is of an enchanted world rescued from the Shiwaliks.

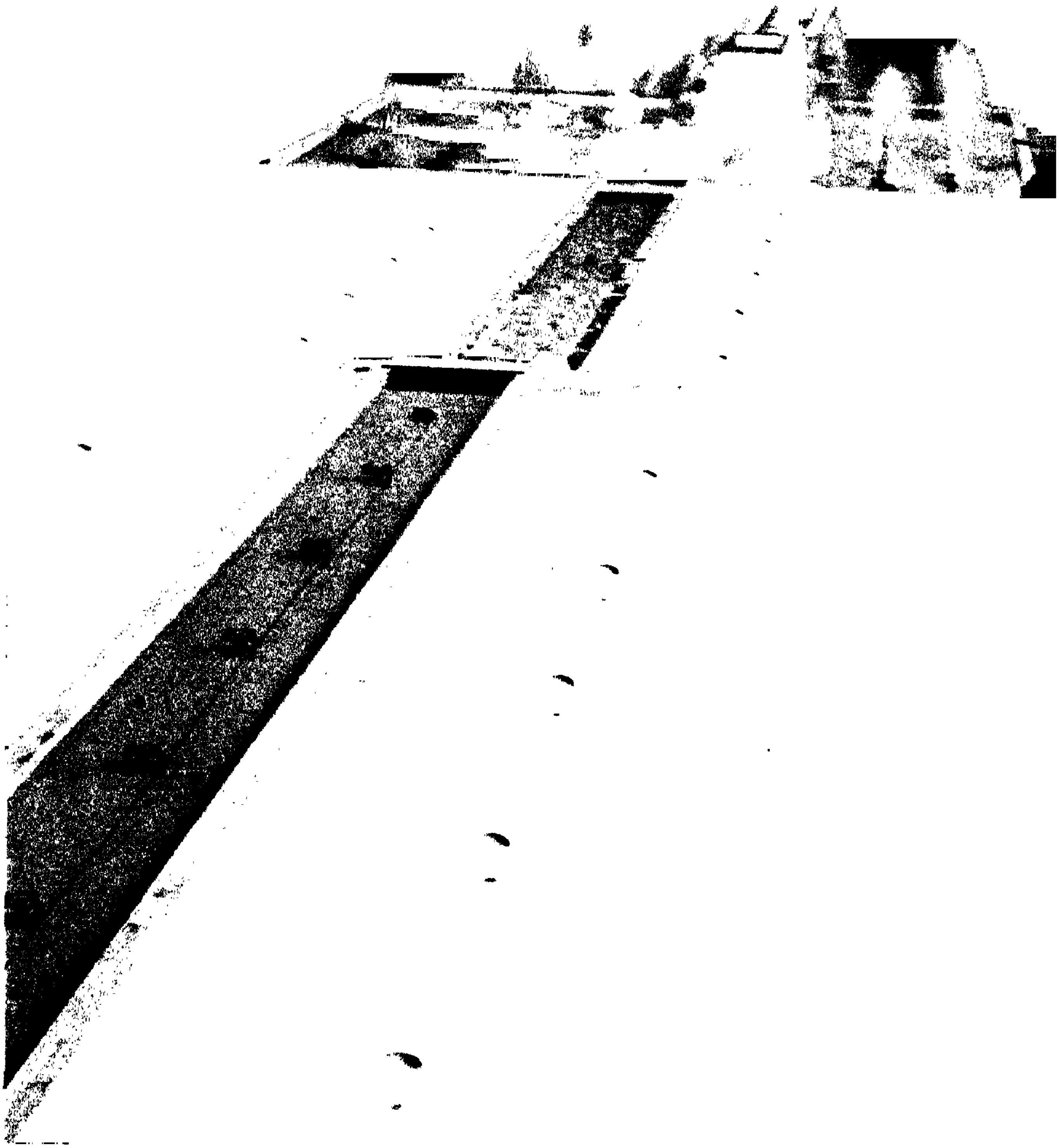
A few metres away, there is the Jami mosque, which is attributed to the builder of the Mughal garden. This mosque seems to have been constructed with the building material of the temples of which a large number architectural pieces can be seen embodied in the later construction.

This Mughal garden of the late Mughal style of Aurangzeb's time is the only surviving monument almost in its original design.

8. Thanesar (Kurukshetra): Tomb of Sheikh Chilli.
(c. 17th Cent. A.D.)

Commanding over the twin towns of Thanesar and Kurukshetra and the countryside around is the tomb of Sheikh Chilli, said to be the spiritual teacher of Dara Shikoh, ill-fated and eldest son of Shah Jehan. High and wide dome of marble with pleasing colour arrangement on the octagonal column combined with the noble position make this tomb "one of the most picturesque monuments of north India" (Cunningham).

(*Continued on Page 41*)



31 *Pinjaur. A view of Fidai Khan's Mughal garden showing the promenade towards Jal Mahal, with the recently activised fountains in Pinjaur gardens.*

Mahal is the first Mughal style pavilion
e descends into Pinjaur garden. The
t the waterway as the cooling device
bed chambers is an ingenious invention
Mughals
ubist Jal Mahal is a compact pure
ng which gets its essential grace through
rrounding waterworks

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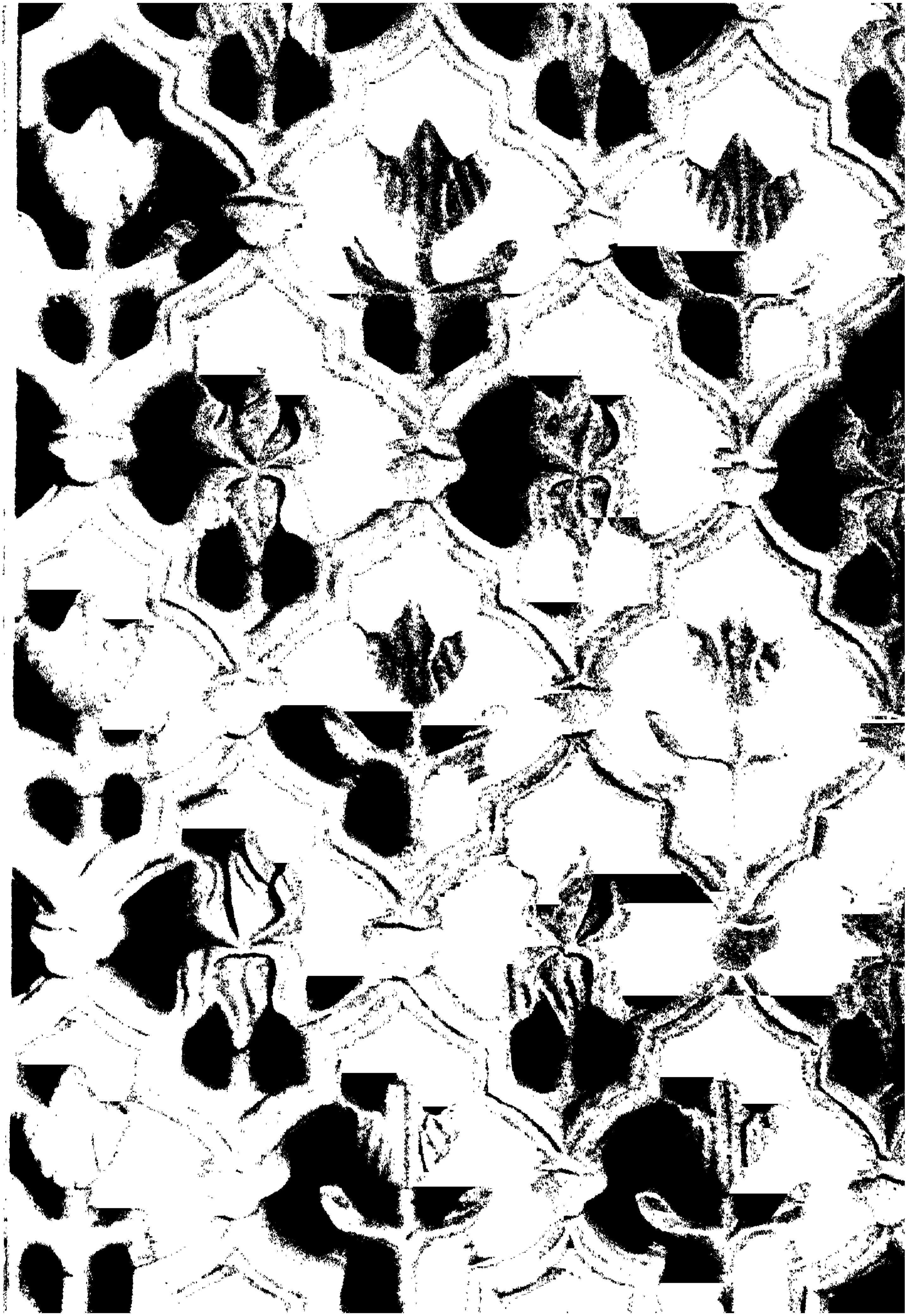
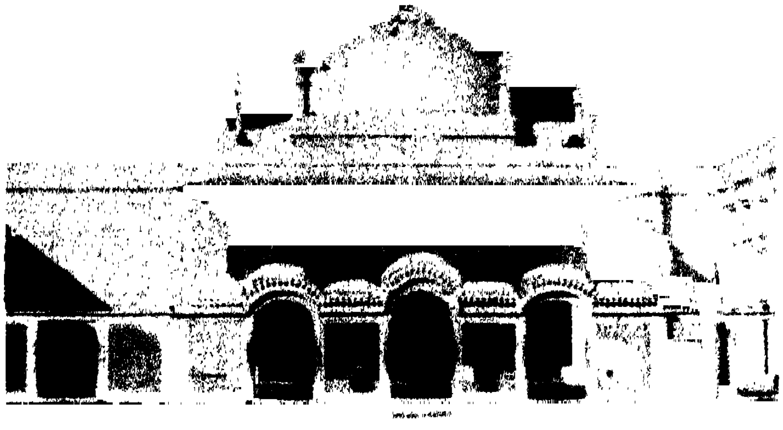
34 *Thanesar. Sheikh Chilli-ka Maqbara. 17th century A.D. The legend of Sheik Chilli, the humourist, lends a certain bizarre interest to this later day tomb in the provincial Mughal style*

35 *Detail showing the guldasta carving on the wall is an adaptation of the Shah Jehan's decorative impulses*





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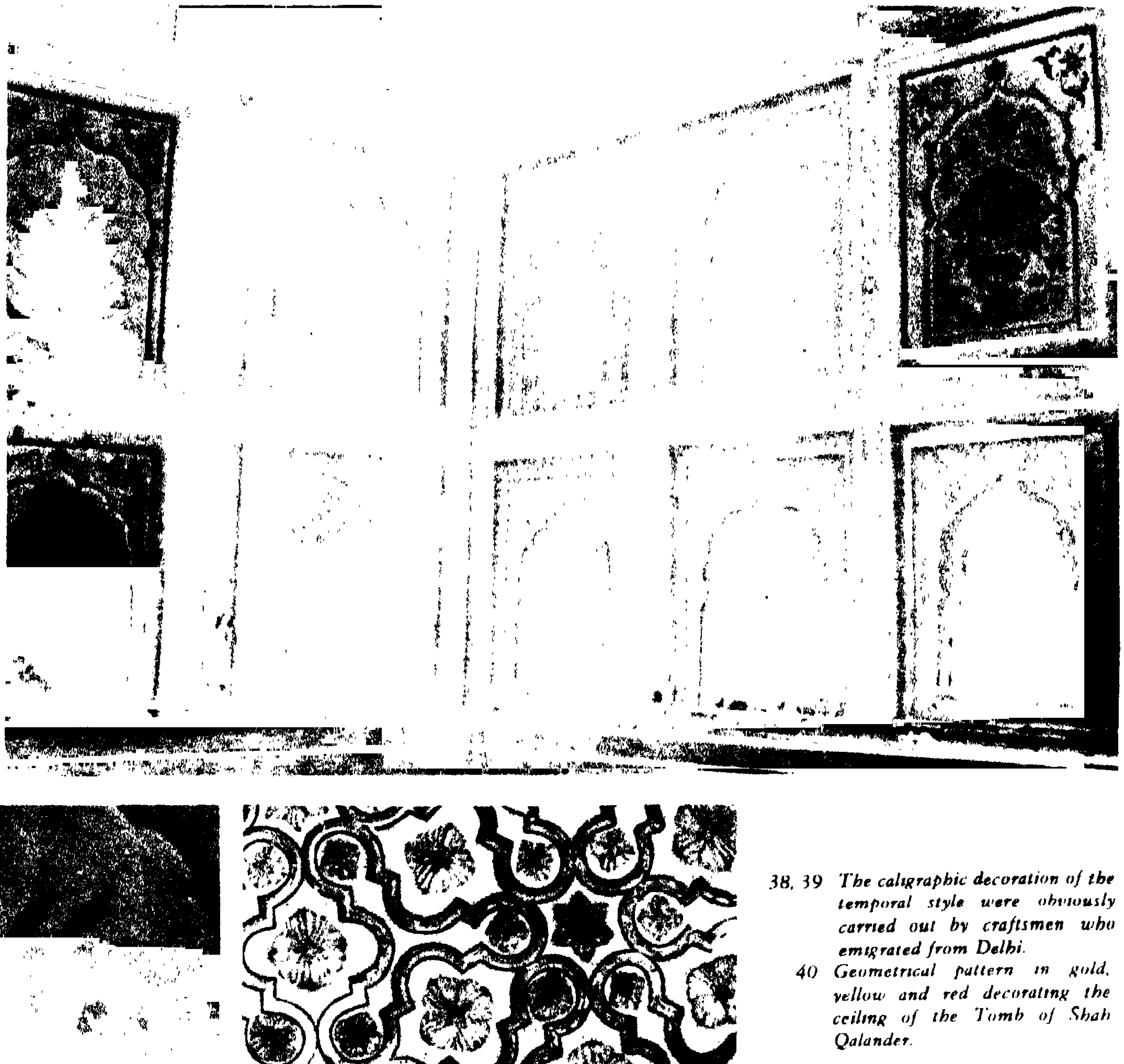
he echo of the Mughal tyle jali from the buildings Agra and Delhi brings fairly sensitive effect in he hands of local carvers. anipat—Tomb of Shah alander A late Mughal tyle structure which bor-ows decorative features ad hoc adjustments.



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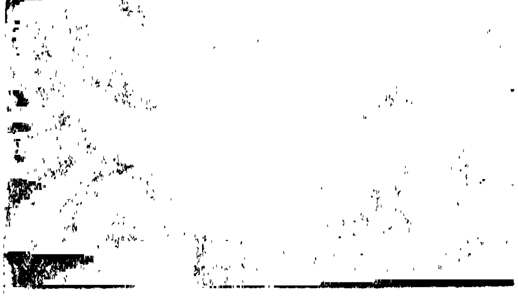

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38, 39 *The caligraphic decoration of the temporal style were obviously carried out by craftsmen who emigrated from Delhi.*
40 *Geometrical pattern in gold, yellow and red decorating the ceiling of the Tomb of Shah Qalander.*

41 *The Farouknagar Baoli is a survival of the resilient Mughal architectural tradition in a little late Nawabdom called, Farouknagar. Modelled on the Baoli in Firuz Shah Kotla it is an intricate and brilliantly designed construction showing remarkable talent in the local craftsmen.*

42 *Exterior construction of the Baoli with the gateway and the arches.*

43 *The pillars of the decayed Shish Mahal in Farouknagar, in black stone, are reminiscent of ambitious little Sultans who lived in the time of civil war and could not achieve the lost grandeur of the Mughals.*

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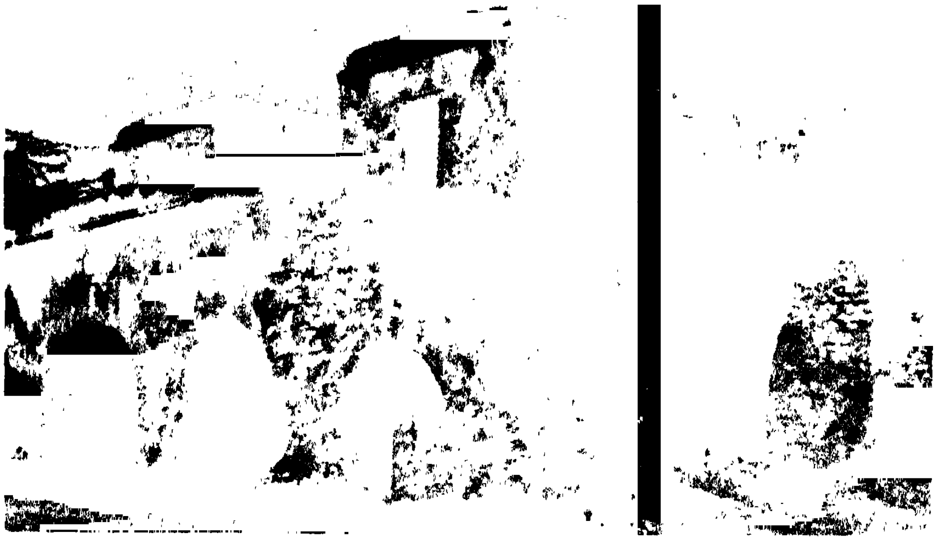

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(*Continued from Page 34*)

9. Panipat (Karnal) Paintings and Marble Screen in the Durgah-i-Shah Qalandar. (18th Cent. A.D.)

Although the original grave chamber is pre-Mughal in date, it had been subjected to successive alterations and additions. During the time of Aurangzeb (1658-1707), it was added with the front verandah which today bears beautiful paintings and stylistic calligraphy on its walls. The marble screen in its front is of fine workmanship.

10. Farouknagar

About the period of decay of Mughal rule, in the first half of the nineteenth century, every big jagirdar of the Imperial court, even near Delhi, tended to assert his independence. Thus these big landowners, who had been rewarded by the central dynasty for revenue collection, built for themselves little forts and palaces. Loharu, Ferozpur Jhirka, Pataudi and Farouknagar were typical of hundred of these small principalities.

The Shish Mahal in Farouknagar, which was got built by the Nawab Ghaus-Ali Shah, is the ruin of a small decorative little mahal in the centre of the township.

The rectangular-structure of the double storey building, placed on a high plinth, overlooks an ample square courtyard. This was perhaps a garden with fountains playing in the middle, with water falling from below the plinth, where the princes sat in their relaxed hours. The large courtroom is flanked on both sides by cool dark chambers. Above, on both sides, are the private apartments for the zenana.

The construction was done with the use of local slate and stone and lime, ground from the quarried stone in South Haryana. The decorations were mostly in mirror-work in the pseudo-Mughal style borrowed from the palaces in the Red Fort.

The palace ruin though in decay is not without charm.

Fort

The ruins of what was once a fairly strong fort, on the outskirts of the township, by the main road, shows that it was an elaborate and well fortified structure, until it was destroyed in the mutiny. Legend has it that the Farouknagar Nawabs joined the camp of Bahadurshah Zafar and were ruthlessly crushed.

Baoli

The Baoli, or well, adjacent to the Fort, near the crossroads, is a multi-storeyed circular structure. There is a running verandah all round, with well framed arches, enclosing the water in the centre. There are over ground chambers for relaxation. The approach to the water is from the underground passage towards the Fort side. This Baoli is a blandishment of the late Mughal period, which improves on the similar Baoli in Firoz Shah Kotla. In fact, it is in good preservation and shows how, even at the end of Mughal rule, the tradition of building had not died out. The construction is entirely in local materials: stone, lime, plaster and brick. It is a good synthesis between the Turkish hamam style and the Indian well.

11. Sohna

Situated under the shadow of the Aravali Hills, by the Delhi-Jaipur Road, the hamlet of Sohna is obviously a survivor from some ancient settlement.

The hot springs, with the healing qualities of the sulphur water, made it a pilgrimage of the folk from near and far. *Sila Kund* is constructed over the much publicised hotsprings at the foot of a perpendicular rock. It is one of the very few secular buildings of the Muslim period and is believed to have been constructed in the fourteenth century, though it has been subjected to subsequent heavy alterations and repairs.

Durgah-i-Nizam-ul-Haq

This is said to be the tomb of a saint, constructed sometimes in the early sixteenth century. It is built in the Lodhi style of architecture.

Besides, there are a number of tombs, mosques, sarais and other structures at Sohna. Of these, mention may be made here of the Kala Gumbad and Lal Gumbad, believed to have been built sometime before 1570 A.D. There is an eighteenth century fort constructed on the brow of the hill overlooking the town.

The cubist and the rectangular houses with ample terraces of the surviving village, are ***reductio ad absurdum*** of the pucca folk style of houses, which synthesise the stone walls of Rajasthani domestic architecture with the incoming Islamic Purdah style houses.

The new constructions of the modern hamams, by architect Dhamija, synthesises the use of local materials, stone and slate with the tradition of the Mughal hamam.

12. Badkal Lake

Ringed round to the north-west by the ridges of the Aravallis, there is a depression, probably bunded in the early medieval period. The reservoir is named after the nearby Badkal village.

The pink dawns here give place to purple noons, fading to torrid white emperean blue and grey and ending in the brief cool twilight—with millions of stars, like permanent glowworms, against the dark sky, making the place the very heaven on the full moon end of the month.

The bund is now broad walk where the Delhiwallas flock every Sunday. Lovers go hiking on the ridges, children find paradisal surroundings near the playgrounds, specially made for them. Little did the builders of the dam know that this watershed would become a boon to new generations.